Commentary

Volume Seventy-four, Number One, July 1982

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Books in Review:
Samuel McCracken/Chaim Raphael/
Leslie Lenkowsky/Susan Seidner Adler/
Eliot A. Cohen/Martin Kramer

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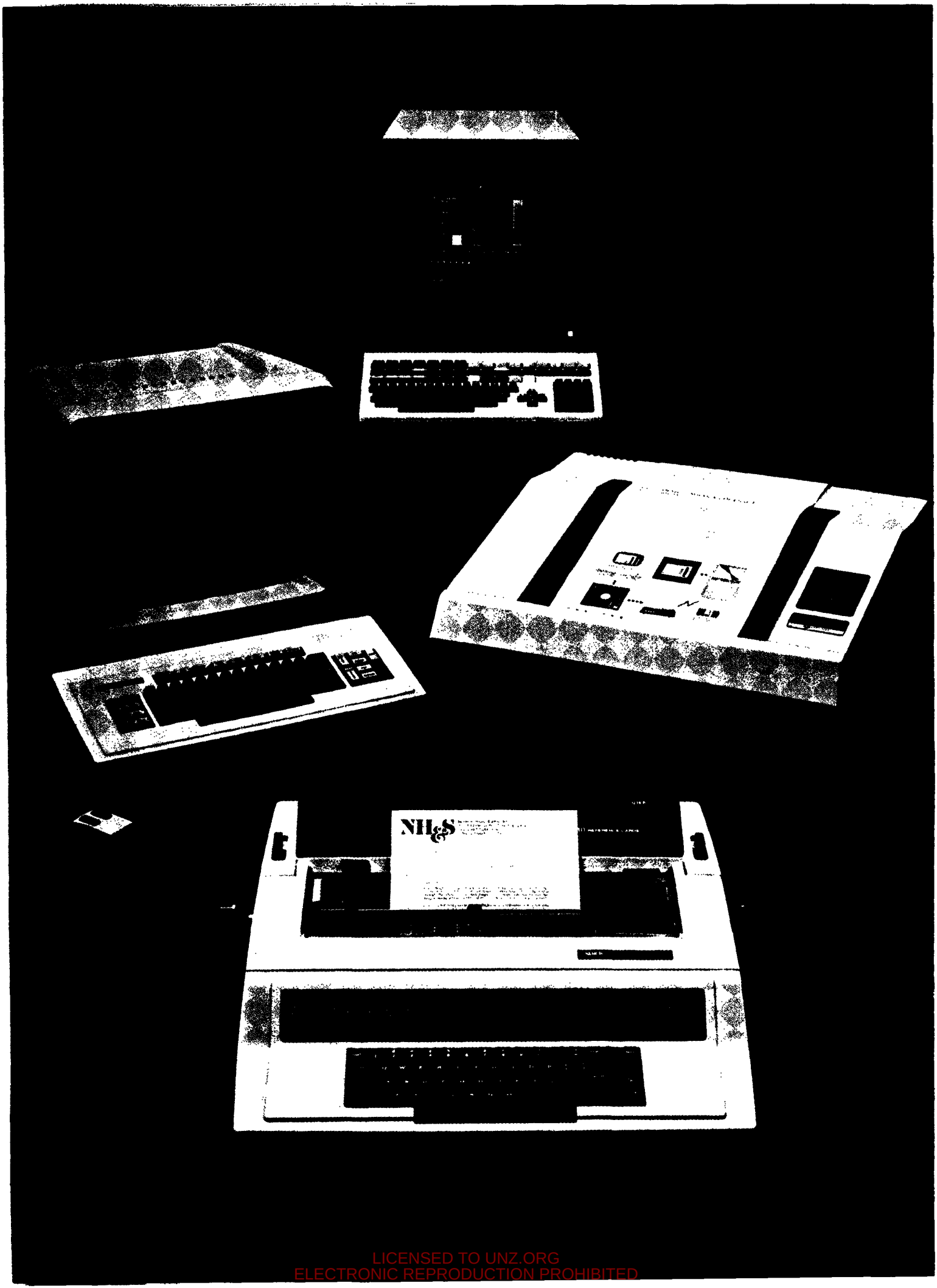

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Commentary

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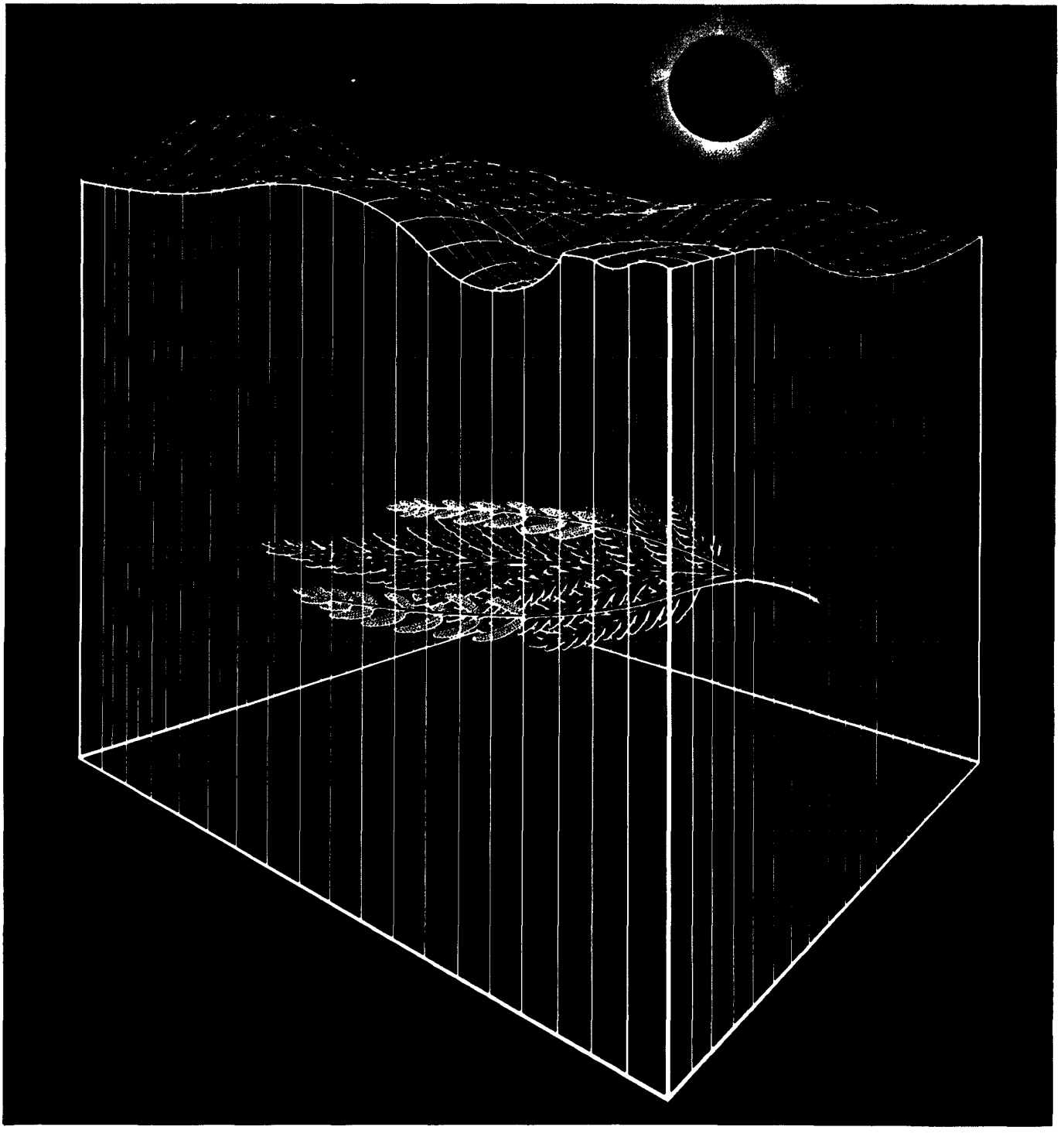

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Letters from Readers

The Draft

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Eliot A. Cohen's article, "Why We Need a Draft" [April], is well written, cogently reasoned, comprehensive—and at variance with the facts.

Undeniably we have military-manpower problems. But these are not so severe as Mr. Cohen alleges, they were not caused by a return to our historic tradition of a volunteer force in peacetime, and they cannot be cured by the reinstitution of conscription.

Mr. Cohen argues (at greater length and in more delicately phrased words) that the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) is too small, too dumb, too black, too poor, and too expensive.

The end-strength of our armed forces has declined since the end of the draft, from 2,510,000 in FY 1972 to a low of 2,027,000 in FY 1979. Mr. Cohen attributes this to the inability of the Pentagon to recruit more soldiers. There could be some truth to this, but there are more likely explanations. For one thing, it is customary to reduce the size of the armed forces after a war has ended, and the post-Vietnam draw-down has been proportionately less severe than the draw-downs following World War I, World War II, or the Korean conflict. For another, our force structure has changed a great deal since the Vietnam period. We have shifted our emphasis from a manpower-intensive Army to a capital-intensive Air Force and Navy. In all the services, we have been replacing older, simpler weapons with a smaller number of newer, more technologically sophisticated, allegedly more capable systems. Fewer personnel are required to operate these systems, which, in theory at least, provide us with a greater combat capability than we had ten years ago.

Mr. Cohen is on slightly firmer ground when he talks about shortfalls in the reserves, but this fact still won't sustain the weight of his argument. In FY 1973, there were 629,000 soldiers in organized Army Reserve and National Guard units, and an additional 759,000 in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). By FY 1979, the strength of the organized components had fallen to 536,000, and the IRR had plunged to 201,000. The dropoff in strength of the organized reserves was worrisome to Army planners, but not a matter of great concern. The dropoff was not all that large for units in transition from a wartime environment to peacetime, and enlistments are now on the upsurge; both the National Guard and the Army Reserve expect to meet their recruiting goals in FY 1983. Furthermore, the initial mobilization role for most reserve units is to replace at U.S. bases the active-force units sent overseas. There would be time to flesh out understrength units with wartime draftees before these units would be sent to combat. Some reserve commanders believe the AVF has in fact *strengthened* our reserve components. During the Vietnam war our Selected Reserve units were full-up, but of doubtful utility, since the vast majority of reservists had enlisted in order to obtain a draft exemption. There are fewer reservists today, but they are there because they want to serve, not because Canada was too far to walk.

The plunge in the IRR is a more serious matter, because the IRR is the pool of pretrained manpower we hope to deploy almost immediately in the event of war in order to replace casualties in existing fighting formations. But this shortfall is a natural and inevitable consequence of the transition from a wartime to a peacetime Army, and has next to nothing to do with whether first-term personnel enlist voluntarily, or are drafted. The size of the IRR is a function of the size of the active Army, and the length of the active-service commitment of first-term personnel. If we have a larger force (as we did during Vietnam), and they serve for a shorter time (an average of 22 months per draftee), then there will be a great many veterans entering the IRR each year. But in peacetime, the size of the force shrinks, first-term personnel serve for longer periods of time, and have a greater propensity to reenlist. This means fewer veterans enter the IRR each year, and remain there for a shorter period of time. The result is a smaller IRR.

It is difficult to reconcile Mr. Cohen's claim that the AVF concept has reduced the quality of military personnel with the fact that the aptitude level of recruits entering the armed forces last year was the highest in history, and is expected to rise still further in the current fiscal year. Nearly a fifth of those who

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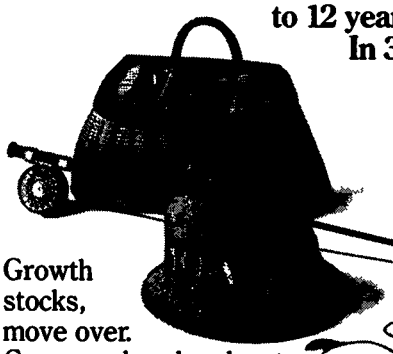

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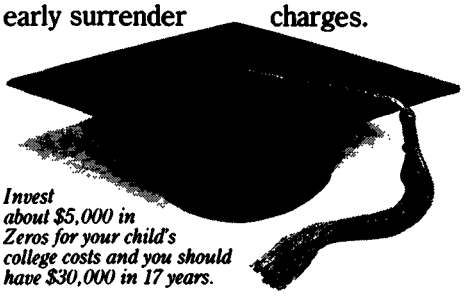

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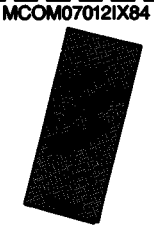

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were drafted during Vietnam would not be accepted for enlistment in the Army today. Mr. Cohen could argue, with justice, that the present recruiting bonanza is a temporary phenomenon generated by the appalling condition of our economy. But the only other time aptitude levels were higher was in the period 1973-76, after termination of the draft, but before termination of the GI Bill.

Mr. Cohen is right to deplore the virtual disappearance of the college-eligible high-school graduate from the enlisted grades, but he's missed the real culprit. The plunge didn't take place when the draft ended in 1973; it happened after the GI Bill was terminated in 1976. The percentage of Army recruits scoring in the two highest mental categories was about the same in 1976 (30 percent) as it had been in 1973 (32.4 percent). But by 1979, the number of volunteers in the highest category plunged by more than half. The proper cure for a problem caused by cancellation of the GI Bill is reinstatement of the GI Bill, not the draft.

MIKE KELLY
Legislative Assistant to
Senator William L. Armstrong
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Why We Need a Draft," Eliot A. Cohen correctly points out a number of flaws in our policies for the procurement of military personnel, particularly for the Army. However, his proposed solution of a draft for the Army reserves is an invitation to a social disaster at an extraordinary cost with doubtful gain in military capabilities.

Mr. Cohen advocates a universal draft for the reserves and argues against any lottery system for selecting or limiting the number of those to be conscripted. He provides no figures on the numbers that would be involved in a universal conscription or the cost of training them. By implication, Mr. Cohen advocates increasing the number of reserve units required to accommodate several million conscripts. He states that "it would be expensive, perhaps, but savings could be made in recruiting budgets and first-year pay for volunteers." Mr. Cohen should compare the cost of equipping and operating a tank or an artillery battalion with that of recruiting. Our country would be better served by basing the size of our reserve conscription on strategic needs rather than population size. . . .

IRVING HEYMONT
Colonel, U.S. Army, Retired
Alexandria, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Bravo! Eliot A Cohen's article is the best-reasoned analysis of the subject I have read.

The problem of combat effectiveness is far worse than anyone could imagine. I am a 1958 West Point graduate, and have many friends still in the service. They confirm that our manpower situation is a total disaster. Mr. Cohen is right on target on every point—effectiveness, morale, *esprit*, training, mobilization, women—and his proposed universal draft for training, and the assignment of draftees to reserve units, is an excellent idea.

I have asked the high-school students I teach if they would object to a draft if *all* eighteen-year-old males have to go—no lottery. The overwhelming response was: "No, if everybody had to go, I wouldn't mind; in fact, I might like it." Their objection is to the lottery, not to military service. . . .

JOHN F. BRINSON
Allentown, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Eliot A. Cohen refers to the "wave of popular revulsion against the draft because of Vietnam." Unfortunately, future wars imposed on the United States will be "dirty" Vietnam-type wars. . . .

The Vietnam war, as the Soviet-American war in Southeast Asia is called, was dragged out and hence lost because of the ineptness of the relevant bureaucracy *in toto* (that is, excluding some brilliant individuals in its midst). The CIA . . . misled the government as much as the liberal media misled the public—and more. As the war dragged on, the "wave of popular revulsion" built up accordingly. The media helped this process, but they did not create the ineptness of the CIA or the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency. The most powerful (if publicly concealed) motivational factor in this build-up of anti-Vietnam-war feeling was the draft. . . .

What do countries under attack need? In case of emergency, such as a direct Soviet military interference, they need an American all-volunteer army that can be *flown* to a troubled spot. About twenty years ago, when I was a Soviet officer of the reserve in Russia I heard that both the Soviet and American military were preparing airborne armies. Such an army was considered more vital for the United States, far removed geographically from the Soviet neighbors likely to be invaded. In 1980 I learned in Washington that hardly anything had been done in this respect in the United States. . . .

Needless to say, members of an all-airborne army must not be "soldiers" as the American military understood the word when it sent draftees to Vietnam. They must be highly capable specialists in their fields, such as anti-guerrilla combat. . . .

Mr. Cohen cites a complaint that AVF tank mechanics "cannot fix turrets." This is like saying that General Motors mechanics cannot tune ignition systems as well as Toyota mechanics do. The answer is: fire them and get capable ones, as Toyota would! The trouble is that those in the defense forces are considered almost outcasts on the American status scale, compared with, say, lawyers—or television anchormen—and are paid accordingly. . . . Well, the United States has what it pays for.

To try to remedy the situation by drafting capable people instead of paying them according to their performance is the most naive part of Mr. Cohen's utopian plan. In a totalitarian society draftees who do not perform well can be shot as an edifying lesson. In the United States, with its veritable legal immunity not only from misperformance but also from culpable negligence or even desertion, it is ridiculous to expect that unpaid draftees will perform where underpaid volunteers do not. With draftees, the United States won World War II and the Korean war, Mr. Cohen might say. But all that is pre-Vietnam history, when the United States had tremendous strategic advantages.

How does Mr. Cohen visualize a *future* war by proxy against Soviet totalitarianism—in, say, Thailand, Turkey, or Egypt? Why would it be different from Vietnam? All the premises would be the same, and Mr. Cohen offers nothing new compared with 1964. . . .

A Soviet soldier does everything for himself: his trench coat, which he carries in a roll, is his house, his bed, his bedding, and everything else in any weather; he cooks his

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own food (of the cheapest kind) and mends his own clothes. But an American combat soldier is serviced by a formidable array of noncombat soldiers, and hence is fantastically expensive by Soviet standards even if he is not paid a cent. Mr. Cohen cannot change this without first reducing American civilization to the standard of, say, Alaskan farmers a century ago. The only way out is to insure that since the American soldier is so expensive by definition, he must be a highly capable combat specialist worth his upkeep. . . .

Every civilization must seek the kind of defense which takes advantage of its strengths, instead of aggravating its weaknesses.

LEV NAVROZOV

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

When President Nixon started the AVF in 1969 (in my opinion, the only major step toward freedom taken by his administration throughout its sorry history), great problems existed in implementing the proposal. Many recruits were unmotivated and the armed forces were reaching into the bottom of the barrel. Large numbers of seasoned veterans left the forces at about the same time in disgust over the poor quality of their leadership (caused partially by the weight of many preceding years of the draft). Morale problems were severe. The war in Vietnam was continuing on its suicidal course. . . .

Now all that is changing. The freedom engendered by the volunteer concept has produced a highly dedicated and professional armed force. The social unrest of the 60's is over, due in no small part to the atmosphere of freedom engendered by the AVF. Salaries are better and the patriotism and intelligence of new recruits are probably higher now than at any time since World War II, if not earlier. And yet *now*, precisely at the time when the volunteer concept has shown that it can produce such wonderful results, various conservative and leftist forces in our society have chosen to call for an end to this institution.

Here we have still another call for slavery. Eliot A. Cohen believes that only through coercion can you motivate men to fight, at least enough men to defend America. Just the opposite is true—since man's mind requires freedom to function, only by appealing to his reason and giving him a free choice can you hope to motivate him to fight. Indeed, only through freedom can you motivate men to accomplish *anything* of value. . . .

The last thing on earth that the American military needs is a large number of cynical, unmotivated, transient recruits. With laser space battle stations, airborne computer-controlled radar, "sleuth" aircraft, Mach-3 jet fighters, directed-energy weapons, etc., and given the insidious nature of our enemy, what the American military needs more than anything else is highly motivated, capable, and well-trained individuals, receiving the substantial compensation their service is worth, and staying on in the military for long periods of time. . . .

To call for drafted men to direct this immensely complex array of weaponry is truly scatterbrained from a purely practical standpoint, and monstrously irrational from an ideological one. . . .

DAVID SOLAN

Norwalk, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Eliot A. Cohen argues that the AVF has failed. What does that mean? Does it mean that any conscripted force must necessarily serve society's ends more fully than any volunteer force? Does it mean that no AVF can "succeed"? Or does Mr. Cohen wish simply to compare the alleged vices of the present existing AVF with the purported virtues of a hypothetically ideal system of conscription?

Before turning to the criteria which lead Mr. Cohen to his conclusion, it is crucial to consider the issue of comparative cost. Cost means "most valuable foregone use" (opportunity cost), not "outlays listed in the federal budget." The true social cost of a conscripted soldier is not the low salary paid by the government, but is instead the economic value of the soldier's foregone output in his best alternative activity in civilian life. Therefore, a conscripted force, even in principle, can never be cheaper socially than an AVF because society must bear the opportunity cost of conscripted manpower. Conscription does not reduce the cost of the military, but instead shifts a major portion of it onto the draftees. A burden supposedly too high for everyone in society to bear is then borne by a much smaller segment of society.

Furthermore, the net effect of conscription on the budget itself would be small because—although recruiting costs and pay for first-term soldiers would be reduced—registration, classification, induction, and enforcement costs would rise. In addition, retraining costs would rise because draftees reenlist in smaller numbers than volunteers. Although Mr. Cohen's conclusions do not depend upon his brief, but incorrect, cost comparison, the failure to define cost correctly leads to an improper application of his criteria. . . .

It is not true that AVF recruits are of lower quality than draftees would be under conscription. But even if it were, this would not imply "failure" any more than does the fact that the Army's trucks would be of higher quality if the government could force their sale at an artificially low price. This also would not imply failure of the concept of free men freely defending America, but rather of the willingness of the taxpayers to provide benefits commensurate with the value of defending their freedom. One gets the quality of armed forces for which one is willing to pay. Unwillingness to pay more is hardly a credible argument against the AVF, notwithstanding the time-honored practice of confiscating labor through conscription. If Congress does not reflect accurately the true popular will about national defense spending, it seems strained, to put it mildly, to argue that conscription is an appropriate remedy for such failures of the democratic process.

Mr. Cohen next complains that the armed forces are now smaller than they would be under conscription. Presumably, our stock of weaponry also is smaller than it would be if we confiscated equipment from manufacturers. But Mr. Cohen avoids the more central issue, to wit, what is the correct military manpower level for national-defense purposes, considering the true cost of raising those forces? Some defense-related jobs are better left to civilians, and others are not worth doing: when labor is perceived to be cheap, it is used cheaply, and when men were drafted, they spent time picking up cigarette butts. To say that a conscripted military would be larger numerically because we are unwilling to pay for a larger AVF says nothing about the comparative *military effectiveness* of an AVF and a conscripted force.

Finally, Mr. Cohen delves into

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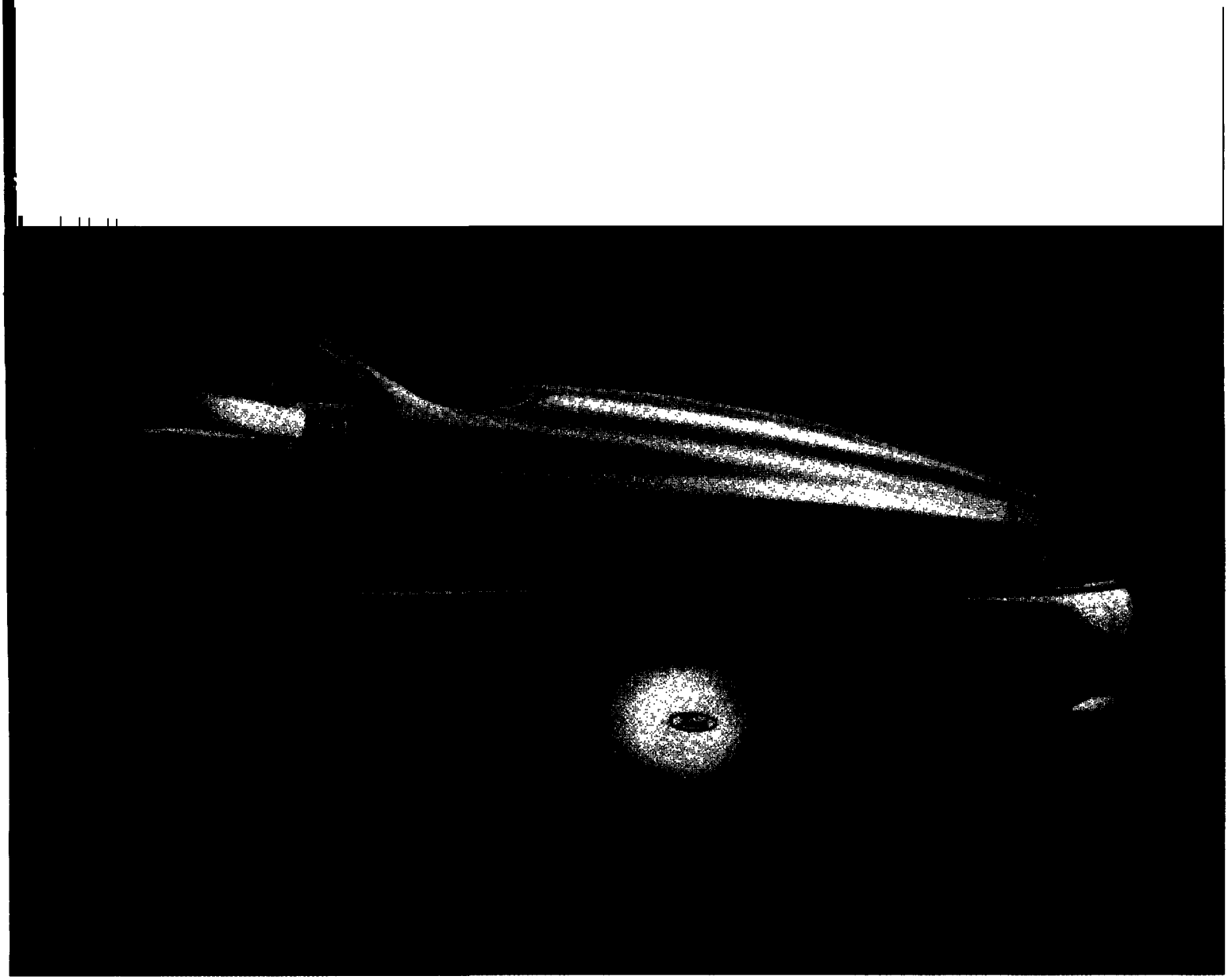

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metaphysics by invoking incantations of "civic duty" and the "noble aspects of military service." No doubt, many soldiers are motivated by patriotism, love of freedom, and a willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice for the benefit of their families and countrymen. This is true for both the AVF and a conscripted force. Indeed, there is no reason to believe that coercing service from an arbitrarily chosen minority increases the values discussed by Mr. Cohen. What is so "noble" about military service performed under threat of imprisonment? Such obfuscation says little about the relative virtues of volunteerism and conscription. . . .

The AVF—properly financed, trained, and equipped—is most consistent not only with the historical principles of freedom upon which our country is based, but also with the cohesion, morale, camaraderie, and professionalism required for military effectiveness. Neither Mr. Cohen's article nor actual experience leads to a different conclusion.

DOUG BANDOW
BENJAMIN ZYCHER
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . As one of over 500,000 youth between the ages of eighteen to twenty-two who has refused to register, I fail to see the viability of a military draft. . . . The government's own admission that there are over half-a-million non-registrants exposes registration as the farce it has become. If American youth will not accept draft registration, we certainly will not accept a military draft. . . .

MIKE FRISCH
Richmond, Virginia

ELIOT A. COHEN writes:

Mike Kelly begins by accusing me of attacking the AVF with disingenuous indirection. In defense I can only plead that I appear to have been sufficiently blunt to have attracted not only his ire, but that of the other correspondents.

On matters of substance: the post-Vietnam reduction in the size of the armed forces went way beyond a return to normal, peacetime conditions. Our armed forces now have half-a-million fewer men than they did in 1964, the last *pre*-Vietnam year. The Army alone has approximately 100,000 fewer men than it did at the end of the 1950's, before the Kennedy-era increase in conventional forces.

Mr. Kelly's argument that this reduction has occurred and is acceptable because the nation is now building a "capital-intensive" armed force is misleading and incorrect. War still requires, as it did in 1940, masses of soldiers, sailors, and airmen. This is something the Israelis know from hard-won experience. They have not only one of the best armed forces in the world but one of the largest. Moreover, if our conventional forces were indeed fully manned there would be no need to use reserve battalions and brigades to plug the gaps in what is now euphemistically termed the "Total Force." If our Navy were fully manned it would not be in the anomalous position of buying ships for which it does not have crews.

The problem of reserve shortfalls is a serious one, as Mr. Kelly admits. He ignores my proposal for drafting men into the reserves, which are otherwise undermanned and unready (recent studies indicate that nearly two-thirds, possibly more, of Army Reserve and National Guard units are unready to fulfill their wartime missions).

Mr. Kelly speaks loosely of "fleshing out reserve units with draftees," which is the same wasteful and ineffective policy that was pursued in the past. Such a choice means the same, in effect, as raising these units from scratch, for the military training of a group proceeds at the pace set by the least-trained individuals, i.e., draftees. In World War II it took approximately a year to raise a division from fresh recruits, and the composite National Guard/draftee units were not appreciably faster in completing their training than their entirely new counterparts. As I stressed in my article, reserve units are most useful—indeed, are only useful—when they are at full strength before mobilization.

As for the relative merits of the reserves during Vietnam and now: during the 1960's the reserves were filled with bright and capable but unwilling college men. Today they are filled with less bright volunteers, some of whom yearn to be soldiers, some of whom yearn simply for the extra hundred dollars a month. One can take one's pick. My view (based in part on conversations with officers who served in the reserves then and now) is that had the reserves been mobilized, the Vietnam-era reservist would have made a better soldier than today's reservist. It is a matter of record that the Army's leadership repeatedly asked the government for a reserve mobilization to fight the Vietnam war, which surely suggests that it would disagree with Mr. Kelly's evaluation of the quality of the reserves.

Mr. Kelly's claim that aptitude levels are higher now than during the draft violates both the facts and common sense. In 1964, the last pre-Vietnam year, 38 percent of all Army recruits were in Mental Categories I and II (considerably higher than in the good year of 1976). In 1980 the same figure was 14 percent. To put the matter very simply: under the draft, particularly a draft without loopholes, college-bound young men enter the ranks. Under the AVF the vast body of eighteen-year-old men who intend to go to college do so directly, and will continue to do so. A renewed GI Bill may be desirable, but it is no panacea. Among other things, it guarantees a low reenlistment rate as bright soldiers leave the Army to get a college education.

The numbers do not support Mr. Kelly's claims, but even so he clings to them with the same misplaced faith that Gulliver found in the analysts of Laputa. Like many defenders of the AVF, he takes comfort in last month's recruitment figures (and, incidentally, one can recruit plenty of high-quality men during a recession) rather than looking at the larger symptoms of failure. Why is the reading level of Army manuals at an all-time low? Why do one-third of the Army's recruits fail to complete their first enlistment? Why have the armed forces recruited women in unprecedented numbers despite their own longstanding and deep-seated misgivings about doing so? Most important of all, what are our prospects for the future if we plan (as the Reagan administration does) to expand our forces substantially but must draw on a shrinking manpower pool? If the AVF has had tremendous difficulties when there were well over two million eighteen-year-olds from whom to recruit, how will it be able to expand successfully when it must look for men from a pool that is 25-percent smaller?

Irving Heymont asserts that a draft would be "a social disaster at an extraordinary cost." Why this would be so he does not explain; during the 1950's the United States

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It died of unnatural causes.

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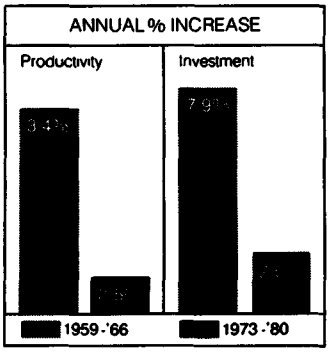
That didn't happen overnight, of course. This chart points out just how much, and how rapidly, our economy has declined:



Comparing the early 60's with the late 70's, America's average annual growth in productivity was lower by 85%. Allowing for inflation, real investment growth in plants, machinery and equipment dropped by 74%.

No one can expect labor to produce without tools. But since 1975, there's been a steady decline in the amount of capital per worker in this country.

A close examination of our economic illness points to one major cause: An overdose of government.

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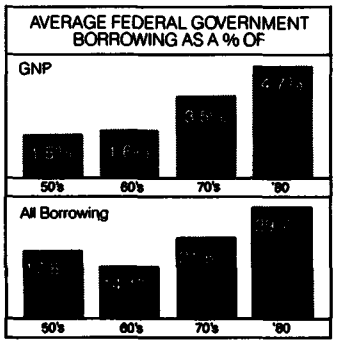
This chart shows the growing impact of government borrowing as a percentage of GNP and of total borrowing over a thirty-year period:



As the government expanded its borrowing, private industry cut back. To reverse this trend, growth in government spending must be slowed in the years ahead.

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had, in effect, universal military service (as do most European countries today). There was no social upheaval, because virtually all young men served, and the financial burden was heavy but bearable because draftees were paid little. As I pointed out in my article, reserve forces are far cheaper than active forces, in some cases by a factor of three or more. Does Colonel Heymont favor a lottery, which would indeed invite dissatisfaction because so few young men would be called? John F. Brinson's letter speaks to this point.

At no time has American military policy ever been neatly based on "strategic needs rather than population size," as Colonel Heymont would like. A just and durable system of military service is not one that is finely calibrated with our war plans (which will in all likelihood, as in the past, have to be junked as soon as the shooting starts) but one that will answer our fundamental needs for an effective front-line force backed by a mass army of citizen soldiers.

Lev Navrozov seems to think that American soldiers can never be as hardy or self-reliant as their Soviet counterparts. I doubt it, and I think that American military history bears me out. We support our troops on a lavish scale because we can afford to do so, not because they will stop fighting if we do not. His proposal for a small airborne army is ludicrous. We do indeed need relatively small professional infantry units for minor Third World contingencies, and we have them in the shape of the Marines, the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, and the Ranger battalions. For contingencies in Europe or even the Persian Gulf we will need large sophisticated armies equipped with the full panoply of modern weapons.

Both Mr. Navrozov and David Solan believe that draftees are *ipso facto* inferior to volunteers ("only by appealing to his reason and giving him a free choice can you hope to motivate him to fight"). This is untrue, as those who experienced the draft, and above all the sergeants and officers who led it, know. Most draftees rapidly absorb the values of the military and without the draconian measures with which Mr. Navrozov is all too familiar.

Similarly, their assertion that modern technology mandates a professional army is untrue. Many sophisticated weapons (the TOW antitank missile, for example) are exceedingly simple to operate. As I said in my article, bright soldiers are needed less for their technical skills than for their ability to learn, innovate, and lead.

The letter from Doug Bandow and Benjamin Zycher is instructive, for it embodies the peculiar outlook of those libertarian economists (perversely known as conservatives) who have promoted and defended the AVF since its inception. Note that their letter begins with the issue of "comparative cost," not budgetary cost, much less duty or military effectiveness. Enthralled by visions of the free market, they fail to understand that a community is more than a collection of self-seeking individuals, and that an army has a far more difficult task than profit maximization.

There is a curiously antiseptic air to arguments such as theirs: one doubts that either writer has talked to experienced drill sergeants, looked at recruits doing basic training, or spoken with harried commanders of front-line units. Questions of obligation they dismiss as "metaphysics." As for their sneering question, "What is so 'noble' about military service performed under threat of imprisonment?," I refer them to those veterans of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam who, reluctantly or not, reported for induction and did their duty.

The pity of it is that arguments like theirs produce young men like Mike Frisch who disobey the law with a clean conscience and apparently believe that citizenship means rights without obligations and immunities without duties. Can Messrs. Bandow and Zycher explain why any soldier, sailor, or airman—well-paid or not—should risk his life defending a society composed of people like that?

"Arms & the Church"

To the Editor of Commentary:

Anyone speaking to the issue of nuclear-weapons policy must avoid two obviously untenable positions: (1) ceding to the Russians military superiority, since their capacity for ruthlessness and disregard for free political institutions is well documented; and (2) rationalizing the status quo, since there is *no* moral justification for nuclear war. Michael Novak's article ["Arms & the Church," March] suffers from the latter, and egregiously so, for by arbitrary selection he distorts the position of his opponents and in effect sets up a straw man.

Mr. Novak acknowledges that the Roman Catholic Church has always recognized and still recognizes the moral legitimacy of waging war in the defense of one's country against unjust attack. Then he turns to the testimony of John Cardinal Krol before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to prove that the American bishops are opposed to the present deterrence policy of the U.S. government: since the use of strategic nuclear weapons cannot be morally justified, the declared intent to use them is wrong. According to Mr. Novak this line of reasoning leads to the conclusion that "security may dictate surrender." This is not, however, the conclusion either the bishops or Cardinal Krol drew, but the one drawn by Father Francis X. Winters, commenting on a sermon delivered by Cardinal Krol at the White House six days after his testimony.

What conclusion the committee of bishops will reach about U.S. defense policy will presumably be presented in a statement scheduled for publication next fall. During the intervening period one must hope that all sides of this soul-trying issue will be explored by the bishops as well as by all concerned Americans with the candor and seriousness it deserves.

Mr. Novak's article has the effect if not the intention of preventing this exploration. For him deterrence is the only acceptable policy. The choice between red or dead is unacceptable to Mr. Novak, as it is to many others. But for him: "Avoidance of both sickening alternatives is the moral good which deterrence, and deterrence alone, effects." That, I submit, is as neat a rationalization of the status quo as one could give. . . .

George B. Pepper
New Rochelle, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

While I agree completely with Michael Novak that nuclear deterrence and resistance to totalitarianism are moral endeavors, this does not mean that there are no moral objections to the methods used in pursuit of these legitimate goals. I reject the naive and simplistic no-

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tions of the antiwar movement that disarmament is a feasible policy, but I also reject the current MAD strategy of retaliation against Russian population centers in the event of war. . . .

If a war were to break out between the West and the USSR, U.S. policy should have as its goal the liberation of the people living under Communist tyranny and not their massacre; this should be second only to the goal of preserving the populations of the West from attack. The policy of mutual destruction of cities serves neither of these goals. Mr. Novak, however, endorses this policy.

The U.S. needs to restructure its strategic forces in such a way as to provide for the physical protection of its own population and to threaten the military-political capability of the USSR. That means a counterforce strategy for the offense and an anti-missile system for the defense, supplemented by civil defense. Deterrence would not be weakened by such a system since the key to deterrence is the knowledge by Soviet leaders that they cannot win a nuclear war. An improved U.S. warfighting/survival strategy would reinforce that knowledge. In fact, since it would improve the ability of the U.S. to control escalation, it would extend deterrence downward to help prevent initial crises, for with this strategy the Soviets would have more to fear from confrontations.

Counterforce is a more moral strategy because it tends to confine destruction during war to military targets, thus avoiding the sort of megadeath Armaggedons conjured up by the peace movement and science-fiction authors. City-busting is not a necessary tactic in a nuclear war. Such a war would be too short for industrial strength to matter much once the shooting started. In a drawn-out war of attrition, such as the first two world wars, fully mobilized populations become a tool of war and thus subject to attack. But that is not likely to be the case in a nuclear exchange. Victory in such a conflict would be determined by the destruction of existing weapons, military units, and command-control facilities—the targets of counterforce.

There is every sign that the Soviets understand this better than we do. Thus their emphasis on large standing forces, the stockpiling of weapons, blitzkrieg tactics for their conventional forces, and counterforce tactics for their nuclear forces. This is because the Soviets hold the "old" notion derived from Clausewitz that the purpose of war is political gain, not wanton destruction. And the proper aim in war is victory, not suicide.

So long as mass murder of civilians is our chosen policy in war, the antiwar movement will be able to scare the West along the path of unilateral disarmament with campaigns such as "Ground Zero Week." The central selling point of all "Ground Zero Week" activities was the horror of bombing cities.

Thus on practical political and military grounds as well as on moral grounds, the United States must shift its strategy and force structure to the requirements of counterforce.

WILLIAM R. HAWKINS
Radford University
Radford, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Lamenting that Cardinal Cooke's defense of the moral tolerability of the strategy of nuclear deterrence was "scathingly attacked," Michael Novak's own scathing attack on bishops who have questioned this strategy seems to be on grounds that their moral judgment is against "the plainly expressed will of the American people." How many repugnant policies have been defended in these terms! Mr. Novak charges that these bishops place themselves beyond dissent and then reports the dissent of Cardinal Cooke, Bishop O'Connor, and others. Accusing the bishops of taking a "political and partisan position" rather than a religious one, he argues that their position is unacceptable, because it is "neutral" and does not serve the partisan interests of the United States as Mr. Novak interprets these interests. Drawing a caricature of the position presented by some bishops, e.g., implying that they have argued "better red than dead," he then attacks his own caricature. (Is it really possible that Catholic bishops have to defend their opposition to Communism?) He further caters to anti-clericalism by stating that some lay Catholics have studied the issue longer, as if the bishops (a) were consulting none but one another, and (b) should leave moral judgments to technical experts. . . . Finally, Mr. Novak's remark about the bishops' desire to have clean hands at the expense of "looking down upon those who keep them free," insultingly begs the question and ignores the fact that church leaders throughout the world are subjecting themselves to persecution and assassination in the name of freedom.

Shame on you, Mr. Novak! If you have nothing to contribute to the moral argument, you would do us all a favor by at least avoiding the kind of reckless writing that corrupts the language of the debate which must take place. . . .

[Reverend] PHILIP J. MURNION
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Along with Michael Novak, I am one of a growing number of concerned Roman Catholics who are deeply disturbed by the pacifist trend of American Catholic clergymen, and their senseless pronouncements regarding the immorality of defensive wars in a nuclear age and the morality of unilateral disarmament. . . .

BRUCE F. STERLING
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Michael Novak is quite right in his conclusion that the political views of the Catholic bishops who speak for unilateral nuclear disarmament must be open to question—not because their views are "Catholic" in nature, but because they are purely political in nature.

Unfortunately there are many religious spokesmen who, having founded a political belief upon religious doctrine, feel that any questioning of their political stance is an attack upon their religion. . . .

To say that nuclear disarmament is an effective way of ending war is but a repetition of the age-old pacifist dream that if one lays down one's own arms, the other fellow will also lay down his. This is like saying that the best way to eliminate crime is to dismiss the police force, or that the best way to end fires is to do away with the fire department.

History has never supported that enticing dream. Those of us who remember the last war in Europe can recall that Hitler was not deterred one whit by the pacifists who sold Czechoslovakia to Germany. . . .

LYBRAND P. SMITH
Torrance, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While influential American Catholic bishops—and Canadian bishops

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as well—may denounce American nuclear deterrence or the Soviet nuclear threat as immoral, on the alleged authority of Vatican Council II, Pope John Paul II disagrees.

In his pronouncement on peace broadcast to the world on December 21, 1981, the Pope said: "Christians, even as they strive to resist and prevent every form of warfare, have no hesitation in recalling that, in the name of an elementary requirement of justice, peoples have a right and even a duty to protect their existence and freedom by proportionate means against an unjust aggressor."

EUGENE GRIFFIN
Ottawa, Canada

MICHAEL NOVAK writes:

George B. Pepper is aware of some alternative to deterrence; I wish he would share it with us. Not wishing to cede to the Soviets military superiority, not accepting a choice between red or dead, not accepting the status quo, what *does* Mr. Pepper accept? When he writes that "there is *no* moral justification for nuclear war," he sheds no light on what we must do to *prevent* nuclear war, immoral as such war would certainly be. For our moral duty is not acquitted by announcing moral principles but by preventing what we abhor.

As for Cardinal Krol's position before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I believe the Cardinal's logic does lead to declaring the possession of a nuclear deterrent morally wrong. We shall soon enough see how rigorous the logic of the bishops is. Should they wish to escape that conclusion, they will have to begin by revising Cardinal Krol's premises, for it is in these that the flaws reside.

William R. Hawkins makes some astute observations about the moral, military, and political superiority of a counterforce strategy over mutual assured destruction. In general, I applaud the shift from the latter to the former. But this shift does require (a) new and better communications and control systems, more capable than the sadly neglected systems of the present; (b) new, more accurately targetable delivery systems, to replace twenty-year-old bombers and missiles designed for grosser purposes and now creaking with age; (c) improved intelligence about Soviet military targets and their changes over time; and (d) public willingness to think carefully about priority targets and fine points of tactics. (I do not mention the need for antimissile defense systems and a massive civil-defense program, both of which were defeated in the Congress at an earlier period of U.S. nuclear superiority.) Will the U.S. bishops support the full range of new expenses required to put a counterforce strategy into effect? Will any religious groups? Will the public?

A democratic society is usually at a great disadvantage in facing a resolute dictatorship, since the voting public ardently wants peace and resists expensive defenses until the threat is clearly revealed. Thus, the mismatch between Soviet preparations and our own, well if briefly described by Mr. Hawkins, is extremely worrisome.

Father Murnion knows as well as I do that bishops in the Catholic Church teach with authority on matters of faith and morals. What is at stake is the full, authoritative statement the bishops will make at their annual meeting this coming November. Father Thomas Ambrogi of San Francisco has aready announced to the press that the first draft being considered by the bishops as of early May declares even the possession of nuclear weapons immoral. If he is correct, the logic of development which my article faithfully reported will have reached its term. If so, Catholics of conscience and loyalty who hold a quite different moral view will have, alas, to choose between the conscience of the bishops and their own. That of the bishops will have authoritative weight against dissenters, as Father Murnion will surely recognize.

Father Murnion thinks the record of the present generation of bishops as opponents of Communism is clear; I certainly wish it were. As for anticlericalism, Father Winters, S.J., not I, posed *that* issue. The bishops as a whole will spend less time and energy on nuclear matters than the elected repesentatives of the people in the U.S. Congress. When they have spoken, on what grounds will they rest their case? Their clerical authority may well stand naked.

Ecclesiologically, are *bishops* the legitimate part of the Catholic community, whose proper vocation it is to decide such matters? I think not. Father Murnion thinks that it will suffice for the bishops (a) to have consultations and (b) to address "moral judgments" beyond those of "technical experts." But staff-directed consultations often are a sham. And it is good theology to recognize that those Christians whose daily vocation involves them in specific areas of judgment offer a fund of moral and theological wisdom hidden from moralists at desks far away.

Church leaders who undergo persecution and assassination deserve respect. As for others, Reinhold Niebuhr addressed Protestant church leaders in the peace movement of early 1941: "'The freedom of these men to speak and write depends upon the existence of a certain type of civilization. Yet they talk and act as if they believed that, whoever wins, religion-as-usual . . . will be the order of the day in America after the war."

And he added: "The choice before us is clear. Those who choose to exist like parasites on the liberties which others fight to secure for them will end by betraying the Christian ethic and the civilization which has developed out of that ethic."

As I see it, many statements by Catholic bishops during the last months involve the heresy of supposing that ethics inhabit a disembodied world, outside and above the institutions of civilization. They seem to regard American civilization solely as a "partisan interest." A few would "trust in God" by disarming, hoping that the Soviets would do likewise. This is no orthodox trust in God. It is the faith of gnostics, for angels from some other world. Christians sound in their faith will resist such sentiment, even when it is piously spoken by bishops.

Surely, Father Murnion will grant that on contraception, the ordination of women, perhaps abortion, usury, the tradition of liberalism, and other matters, he would not be willing simply to concede that bishops always speak for the whole wisdom and range of Catholic faith. Yet on matters of nuclear disarmament, he is certain that they are towers of orthodoxy. Is this where they find Scripture clear? Is this where tradition is on their side? Or is this a place—an odd place—for thinking in "a way entirely new"? Not all will follow the bishops into such novelties. It will be a shame on theological, ecclesiological, and moral-political grounds, if the Catholic bishops of the U.S. choose to divide consciences here, where they have no special authority, where many matters are factual and prudential and subject to much dispute, and where many persons of good conscience are in wide disagreement. Many of us hope that the bishops,

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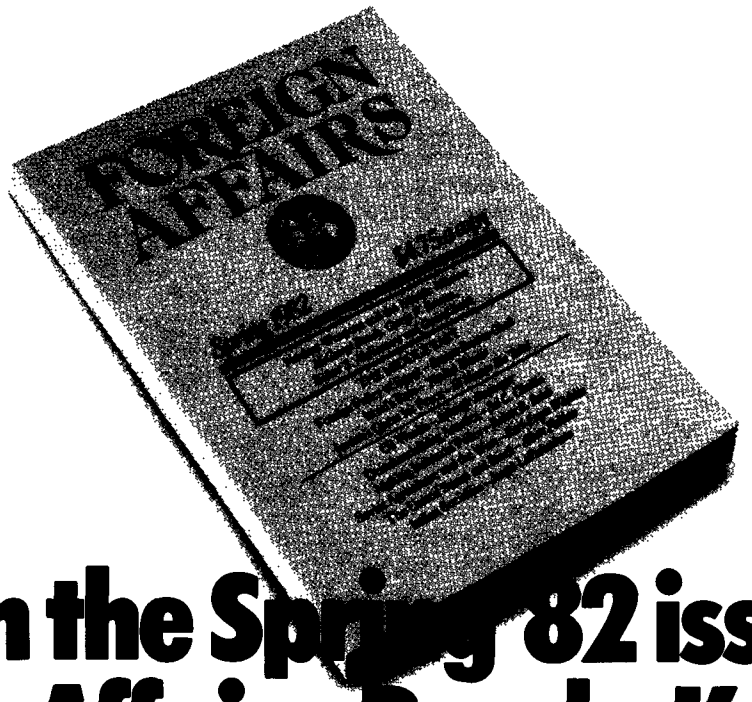

In the Spring '82 issue of Foreign Affairs, Bundy, Kennan, McNamara and Smith explain why NATO's policy, since 1949, of Nuclear First Strike could be wrong.

Dead wrong.

McGeorge Bundy was Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from 1961 to 1966 and President of the Ford Foundation from 1966 to mid-1979. He is currently Professor of History at New York University.

George F. Kennan is Professor Emeritus at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. He was U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1952, and to Yugoslavia, 1961-63, and is the author of *Soviet-American Relations, 1917-20* (2 Vols.); *Memoirs* (2 Vols.) and other works.

Robert S. McNamara was Secretary of Defense from 1961 to 1968 and President of the World Bank from 1968 to mid-1981.

Gerard Smith was Chief of the U.S. Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) from 1969 to 1972, and is the author of *Doubletalk: The Story of Salt I.* He also served as Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for atomic energy affairs (1954-57), Director of the Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State (1957-61), a full-time consultant on the Multilateral Force (1961-64), and Ambassador at Large and Special Presidential Representative for nonproliferation matters (1977-80).

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accordingly, will speak in an inclusive Catholic way, recognizing diversity, and not in a sectarian fashion.

The letters of Bruce F. Sterling, Lybrand P. Smith, and Eugene Griffin add strength to my argument, for which I am grateful.

The Middle East

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Steven L. Spiegel ["The Middle East: A Consensus of Error," March] argues for maintaining the status quo on the Arab-Israel conflict after the return of the Sinai to Egypt. While the Arab-Israel conflict is not the cause of all of the problems in the Middle East, the resolution of this dispute would certainly reduce tensions in the area. The failure to resolve this problem will, in the long run, inevitably lead to a holocaust, particularly in the context of a nuclearized Middle East.

There are many misperceptions regarding the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The Israeli government is not opposed to the establishment of such a state in the Middle East, so long as it is not on the West Bank. Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Defense Minister, has stated on a number of occasions that he has no objections to the establishment of a PLO-run Palestinian state in Jordan, for example.

A Palestinian state *per se* would not significantly increase the existing level of instability in the Middle East, nor would it pose a significantly greater threat to Israel than the present arrangement. As Robert W. Tucker indicated in his article in the November 1975 COMMENTARY ["Israel and the United States: From Dependence to Nuclear Weapons?"], Israel, with a recognized operational nuclear-weapons system, would even be able to tolerate an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank. More recently, Generals Harkabi and Yariv, former Israel Defense Force intelligence chiefs, have also tended to support this position.

The major obstacle to bringing about an accommodation between the Israelis and the Palestinians, including the PLO, is the refusal on both sides publicly to recognize each other's right to self-determination. As a means of bridging the gulf between the two sides, Sadat had suggested a possible approach which he saw as a continuation of the Camp David process. He advocated direct or indirect negotiations between the two parties that would enable them to issue simultaneous statements recognizing each other's right to self-determination. . . . A precondition for the commencement of such negotiations would be the continuation of the cease-fire between Israel and the PLO, cessation of all attempts by Israel further to extend control over the West Bank and the Golan, and cessation of all acts of terrorism by the PLO in Israel and elsewhere.

It is obvious that any possible settlement between Israel and the Palestinians involving the PLO would take years to achieve. There is no reason why this process could not move in concert with the autonomy experiments that Mr. Spiegel claims will occur during the next five years. The importance of initiating such negotiations now is to send a signal to the Palestinians that the autonomy proposed for the West Bank is not permanent. The environment that would be created by these negotiations would dramatically reduce tensions between the Israelis and the Palestinians, while at the same time raising expectations for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. . . .

ALFRED LEVINSON
New Jersey Institute of Technology
Newark, New Jersey

STEVEN L. SPIEGEL writes:

Alfred Levinson's letter is a valuable lesson in the typical conceptual mistakes which have led to the "consensus of error" of which I wrote in my article. In particular, Mr. Levinson exhibits the classic American penchant when dealing with foreign affairs for engaging in wishful thinking and a search for panaceas.

Mr. Levinson's "quick fix" appears to be that the deployment of nuclear weapons would somehow provide Israel with the security to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This strikes me as a peculiarly inappropriate and dangerous reliance on technical means to resolve political problems. The Palestinian question cannot be resolved today not only because of competing claims and mutual distrust but primarily because of a total unwillingness by the key Arab parties to the dispute to take Egypt's diplomatic route of recognizing and seeking a peace treaty with Israel. As long as these conditions remain, how will the possession of nuclear weapons enable Israel to withdraw? On the other hand, if the Palestinian problem could somehow be resolved to the satisfaction of all involved, why would an Israeli nuclear force be necessary?

Mr. Levinson expresses optimism about the nuclear question because he completely misunderstands the intransigence of the PLO. Therefore, he holds the Israelis and the PLO equally responsible for the current impasse. But this posture totally distorts political reality. Even Yehoshafat Harkabi, whom Mr. Levinson cites and who is one of the severest critics of the Begin government, vehemently denounces the PLO in a recent article; he demonstrates that PLO refusal to recognize Israel is not tactical but an inherent part of PLO doctrine.

Mr. Levinson, moreover, falls into the typical misconception of American policy intellectuals who advocate either that a new peace process should displace the autonomy talks altogether or that a new effort shoud be undertaken alongside the negotiations. The Camp David framework is not responsible for the current impasse; if it were, how can Mr. Levinson and those who take similar positions explain the absence of peace before 1978? Camp David is the only approach to Arab-Israel negotiations in thirty-five years which has produced a framework for peace. Why jettison it now and thereby confirm the diplomatic effectiveness of those Arab states which reject Camp David?

It is ironic indeed that even after April 25, 1982, the country which, with considerable internal pain, division, and compromise of its security, sacrificed 90 percent of the territory it captured in 1967 and nearly a year's worth of its GNP in economic concessions is still blamed for current problems.

At Camp David Israel recognized "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people"; what has the PLO recognized besides violence and terror?

Music & Education

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In urging a return to an education that *instills* "the set of values which has built and integrates our otherwise pluralistic societies," Samuel Lipman ["The Miseducation of Musicians," February] in his self-righteous elitism exemplifies a ma-

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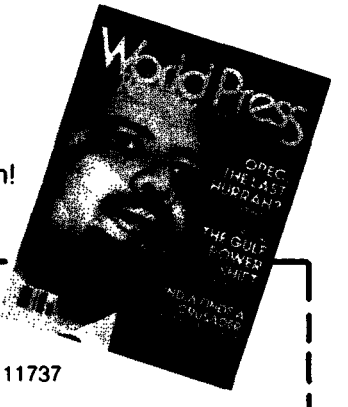

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jor factor influencing the estrangement of present audiences from "serious" new music. This is ironic, for he otherwise criticizes and blames audiences for their slavish devotion to the standard repertory and their resulting inattention to new music. The analyses and highly selective evidence he cites of what he sees as progressively eroding quality in all of education also reveal the kind of ethnocentrism that will alienate future audiences as well. Certainly if modern music is to be for and of its age it will take the same variety of forms and will respond to the same wealth of influences as does any cultural manifestation at any time in history.

For the same reasons, education must also be for and of its age: this age! While we can ill afford to "throw out the baby with the bath water" and must strive to keep intact our inherited wisdom, neither can we fail to make improvements and adjustments in education in order to meet modern needs and problems. A healthy culture not only has room for both the bedrock of tradition and the newest flights of human imagination and creation, it requires both! . . .

Although the "conservatory" stems in name from the orphanage-workhouses of the Renaissance in which foundlings were often given musical training, it seems clear that today its "conservative" function is largely to perpetuate the best musical accomplishments of the past—including not just music but pedagogy as well. By its very nature, then, it sets out to accomplish many of the objectives to which Mr. Lipman objects. Like it or not, the single-minded pursuit of virtuosity within a limited repertory is intended to lead to professional careers, not to teaching careers or to developing the music-loving audiences Mr. Lipman desires. Conservatory training, however, should not be confused with the goals, practices, and roles of "schools of music"—by whatever name—within a university.

When a large school of music exists within a liberal-arts setting, the "low level of general culture among music students" that Mr. Lipman observes in his . . . narrow sample of students gives way to the broadening influences of faculty and students from other disciplines and of the entire spectrum of achievement—past and present—of this and other cultures. Those conservatories having no functional connection with a college or university do usually try to provide some general studies in the humanities but such programs cannot begin to equal the effect of living and studying music in a liberal-arts matrix. The school of music also provides on campus an offering of musical culture that surely would be missed otherwise by large numbers of students, the other faculty, and the surrounding communities.

In addition, a more continuous and varied diet of contemporary music is often available on such campuses than elsewhere and certain aspects of the contemporary scene in music are sustained largely by such institutions. A large and steadily growing number of orchestral players are graduates of these programs. However, by virtue of the general studies and other opportunities offered in liberal-arts institutions, many graduates of these programs end up in careers and professions other than music, yet have precisely the kind of background that makes them the kind of "music lovers" Mr. Lipman prefers over performers.

Finally, we can assure Mr. Lipman that music majors entering our own large music program at the State University of New York at Fredonia are already among the very best educated of any students entering the college. Most non-music professors are pleased to have these students in their classes precisely because of their excellent backgrounds. . . .

In fact, we are far less worried about the contributions of our music students to the world than we are about the prospective impact of Mr. Lipman's ideas on education. His caricatures are drawn too broadly from a perspective that is too narrow. His rhetoric places barriers in the way of the processes of renewal that must characterize cultural institutions if they are to bring culture "to life" for society. The insularity of his remarks will only provoke the counterforces of parochialism. We doubt he would approve of the consequences of such a face-off of implacable ideas or that the musical art would be in a more favorable position as a result.

DALLAS K. BEAL
President
THOMAS A. REGELSKI
Professor of Music
State University College
Fredonia, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Samuel Lipman raises some very interesting and thought-provoking questions. His article created a great deal of debate and discussion among the faculty of . . . the Crane School of Music at Potsdam College.

I am happy to say that most of the concerns raised by Mr. Lipman do not seem to apply to Crane. The Crane faculty strongly believes in teaching and appreciation of both classical and contemporary music. This effort is assisted by the presence on our faculty of so many composers, by faculty members and students devoted to contemporary idioms, and by the "compositional" approach employed in the Basic Musicianship course sequence. The Crane faculty is of the view that if the art is to continue to grow and flourish, the fixation only on classical music must be resisted. It believes in a healthy balance between classical and contemporary music.

Specifically, at Crane, we try to help our students grow in musical literacy and understanding, by providing them with the "elite" literature handed us by our Western forebears, the works created by musicians of our own time (including our students themselves), and the less well known, but marvelous, various musics of non-Western cultures.

We strive to develop in our students a love for all music, performed at the highest artistic level possible, on the best quality instruments we can obtain, and under the best acoustical surroundings we can provide.

We are committed to the Potsdam College goals of liberal education. All students in professional degree programs in the Crane School take a minimum of approximately 30 percent of their college work in fields other than music. Many take much more than this, and all include, as well, work at both lower- and upper-division levels in the history, literature, and theory of music. . . .

We believe that music is, indeed, part of the great tradition of culture and learning. We hope to assure its place in the society of the future by helping in the development of practitioners—composers, improvisers, conductors, performers, listeners, evaluators—whether they be professionals or those whose role will be primarily that of audience members.

We attempt to use technology as an aid to learning, not as a substitute. A computer can serve as well as can a book or a score.

While individual instruction in music remains a cornerstone of our teaching process, we recognize pe-

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dagogical and other reasons for group study. . . .

I am also happy to say that the Crane School of Music reviews its music program periodically to insure that it is academically sound and rigorous. . . .

JAMES H. YOUNG
President
State University College
of Arts and Sciences
Potsdam, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I teach at Northwestern University (in the neurobiology and physiology, psychology, and ophthalmology departments) and have experienced some of the same problems Samuel Lipman describes. In the classroom, almost any literary, artistic or historical reference is guaranteed to produce the blankest of stares. When I first noticed these stares, I thought they were temporary, likely to pass when the turmoil of the late 1960's passed. But the stares became ever more frequent. Students are simply unconnected to their own past. . . .

In my classes, students cannot really appreciate the scientific developments covered by the courses unless they have some sense of the philosophical and historical context from which those discoveries emerged. Without some feeling for the historical forces that impeded or stimulated a discovery, students of science are like the music students Mr. Lipman describes: very proficient technically but without involvement, appreciation, or the ability to relate one technical skill to another.

Mr. Lipman writes that no one among an audience of 100 at his lecture on the "Mephisto Waltz" knew the Faust legend. His mention of Faust reminded me that when I lecture on the physiological basis of color vision, I describe Goethe's contribution to this problem and his refusal, primarily on aesthetic grounds, to accept Newton's demonstration that "white" light is composed of various spectral elements. Now 95 percent of my students (juniors and seniors) know the name "Goethe" only because we have a street (invariably pronounced "Goaty") in Chicago by that name. "Newton" most students still recognize, but that too shall pass.

Thus the "breakdown of common discourse" is a problem not only for people in the humanities but for people in science as well. Of course, these occupational inconveniences seem petty compared to the pervasive "breakdown of common discourse" throughout our society.

ROBERT SEKULER
Evanston, Illinois

SAMUEL LIPMAN writes:

Dallas K. Beal and Thomas A. Regelski find a contradiction between my comments about the harmful effects of the present rejection of new music and my evident advocacy of teaching the elite values of our cultural past. There is, I believe, no contradiction here. The parlous state of new music, like the equally parlous state of contemporary education, is caused in large measure by just that indiscriminate exaltation of the new combined with the downgrading of the accumulated wisdom of society which has become the chief stock-in-trade of the educational establishment. Insofar as it has had the power, this establishment has rendered the new rootless and the old meaningless. The prime casualty of its success has been a viable contemporary culture.

The facts about the present state of American education fairly shriek at us. Reading scores—even when produced by the kind of jiggery-pokery which prepares students not for reading but for taking the test—are hardly encouraging; the ability to write correct English seems to have migrated to that paradise where also reside the secrets of Stradivarius violins and medieval stained-glass windows. Knowledge, either of history or of contemporary affairs, is at the vanishing point among our college students. The very existence of academic institutions—New York City's own university system is a case in point—as a venue for intellectual labors seems increasingly in doubt. In music itself, such skills formerly taken for granted (for the talented) as score-reading and transposition are hardly to be found anywhere among young professional musicians; it is not that students are less talented than they used to be, but rather that less is asked of them, and, most assuredly, less is taught to them.

Much of the fault, it seems clear to me, lies with all the apostles of contemporaneity and relevance. But the aim of education is *not* to teach the young what they can—and always do—find out for themselves; instead its aim should be to teach them what they must know, even when that needful knowledge is remote from their lives because of the distance in time from them of its origin.

Messrs. Beal and Regelski's unfavorable comparison of conservatories with their own type of enterprise is, I would suggest, deeply self-serving. There is no evidence that graduates of college music schools know very much more about civilization than do graduates of conservatories; there is, however, every evidence that, on the average, they don't play as well. I do not believe that my (according to Messrs. Beal and Regelski) "narrow sample of students" would compare unfavorably in talent, achievement, or general culture with students at Fredonia. I am impressed that music majors entering the program at Fredonia "are already among the very best educated of any students entering the college"; I would be still more impressed if their advocates had provided COMMENTARY's readers with the baseline which underlies their conclusions.

James H. Young's courteous letter demonstrates how even the educationally well-meaning are unwilling to make choices and establish hierarchies. He speaks, for example, of the ". . . marvelous, various musics of non-Western cultures" as an equal constituent of a proper curriculum; further on he finds that "a computer can serve as well as can a book or a score." Would that reality were really so conformable to educational planning.

Finally, I salute Robert Sekuler—not for agreeing with me, but for continuing the struggle. He seems to understand that the business of a teacher is to teach what the students don't know, not to try to survive by keeping the inmates quiet.

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In Defense of Quality

Considerations of the federal budget, when they get around to defense spending, tend to reignite the debate over quality versus quantity in military hardware.

Within the funding available for defense procurement, is the nation better off buying larger numbers of simpler aircraft, missiles, tanks, and ships? Or are national defense and security better served with fewer units of equipment that's more advanced technologically and provides greater performance and capability? Such equipment is necessarily more costly, for the same reason that a 10-speed bike costs more than a 3-speeder.

The advocates of quantity argue that sheer numbers count for more in combat than the quality of the hardware. The central flaw in this contention is that low-technology weaponry in many cases cannot do the job in our high-technology times.

Take fighter aircraft as an example. To be sure, there are combat arenas where large numbers of less advanced fighters could deliver better results than smaller numbers of more sophisticated and expensive planes. But the reality of aerial combat is that conditions are generally less than ideal. They are unlikely to be suited to the use of simpler planes. Wars aren't always fought from 8 to 5 with crystal skies.

What about nighttime operations? Adverse weather? The need to penetrate enemy defenses? In the face of such demands, the test of combat could not be met by planes that are blind in the dark or murk and are armed with visual-range missiles. What these missions require are high-performance aircraft equipped with electronics to see and sense things their crews cannot, and weapons that can find and destroy targets even when they're shrouded in darkness or clouds.

Similar failings apply to ground-based and seagoing equipment that's simpler in design and ability and hence less costly:

- tanks too lightly armored to stand up to the pounding of enemy fire;
- ships lacking electronic brains, eyes, and ears for long-range surveillance and strike;
- carriers incapable of launching powerful attack aircraft;
- submarines without the range and endurance provided by nuclear propulsion.

Austere weaponry certainly has a place in America's defense arsenal. But it cannot substitute, whatever its quantity, for equipment delivering the greater performance and versatility made possible by electronics and other advanced technologies.

The Soviets' military production is awesome. They spend 15% of their gross national product for military purposes, compared with 6% for the U.S. Last year they built five times as many fighters and fighter-bombers as the U.S., seven times as many armored personnel carriers, five times as many tanks, three times as many ICBMs.

At this time, there is no way the U.S. can match the Soviet Union in *quantity* of weaponry. Where we must excel is in *quality*. We must design and build into our equipment the highest useful quality and capability that technology can provide. (Even so, that shouldn't mean "gold-plating," or overdesigning to deliver unneeded performance at great cost.)

When American lives and security interests are at stake, second best isn't good enough.

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Disinformation: Or, Why the CIA Cannot Verify an Arms-Control Agreement

Edward Jay Epstein

WHEN Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger revealed last April that the Soviet Union had achieved superiority over the United States in intercontinental missiles, he provoked a furor in Congress over the status of the nuclear balance. Weinberger's revelation also pointed to an intelligence failure of unprecedented proportions that extended back over two decades, and that cast a great shadow of doubt over the capacity of the United States to keep accurate track of the Soviet military arsenal and therefore to verify any arms-control agreement with the Soviet Union in the future.

In 1961, the Soviet Union, despite all its bluff and bluster, had deployed only four cumbersome and unreliable intercontinental missiles. U.S. intelligence had confidently asserted that there was no way the Soviet Union could ever deploy the number of missiles necessary to threaten the rapidly expanding American missile force without providing years of advance warning.

Such confidence then seemed fully warranted, as U.S. intelligence had through its technical wizardry found means of intercepting virtually all the Soviet missile-testing data, or telemetry, and of determining the accuracy of the missiles. It was on the basis of this powerful array of intelligence about Soviet activity that American leaders made crucial decisions throughout the 1960's concerning the number, location, and defense of America's missiles.

Yet in the event, these intelligence assumptions proved to be seriously flawed. Even though its missile testing was being relentlessly monitored by America's electronic sentinels in space and on land, the Soviet Union, *without* alerting U.S. intelligence, managed to develop—and deploy—missiles with multiple warheads accurate enough to attack the most hardened missile silos in the United States. How could such a massive development not have been detected?

At first, explanations for this incredible intelligence failure tended to focus on the errors of the American analysts. The inability to see improved Soviet missile accuracy was attributed either to the prevailing disposition grossly to underestimate Soviet technical competence, or to incorrect assumptions about the method by which Soviet scientists tested missile accuracy. The fault, in other words, lay in self-deception.

However, when the data taken from the Soviet missiles were studied in retrospect, with the help of new and better methods of analysis, it appeared that considerably more was involved in the intelligence failure than American mistakes and self-deception. This reanalysis suggested that the Soviet Union had deliberately and systematically misled American intelligence by manipulating and "biasing," as it is called, the missile transmissions that were being intercepted. In other words, by channeling doctored data into our most sophisticated scientific spying devices, Soviet intelligence had duped the satellites and antennas on which American intelligence had come to depend. The Soviets had thereby effected a decisive change in the delicate balance of strategic missiles.

After nearly a decade of bitter debate within the secret world of intelligence, the deception issue still remains unresolved. Recently a plan was drawn up by the National Security Council staff to place technical as well as human spies under the scrutiny of a centralized counterintelligence authority. The proponents of this reorganization argue that without such an "all-source" unit, able to piece together information from secret agents, surveillance cameras, and the interception of coded messages and telemetry, the various intelligence-gathering services could again be easily deceived. The opponents of this plan in the American intelligence agencies doubt that the Soviets ever in fact orchestrated a massive deception of our highly sophisticated monitoring devices, and reject the proposed centralization as unnecessary and destructive of morale. The deep and intense divisions over this plan were reflected in the sudden resignation of Admiral Bobby

EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN writes often on issues of intelligence. Among his books in this field are *Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald* and *Inquest: The Warren Commission and the Establishment of Truth*. He has also contributed articles to the *New Yorker*, the New York *Times Magazine*, and COMMENTARY (including "The War Within the CIA," August 1978). Mr. Epstein's latest book is *The Rise and Fall of Diamonds* (Simon & Schuster).

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Inman, who opposed it, as the Deputy Director of the CIA.

Thus, at the core of the dispute is not merely a jurisdictional struggle over who should test the probity of exotic intelligence, but a powerful disagreement over the vulnerability of American intelligence to deception on matters of vital national security. With a multibillion-dollar global intelligence system at our command, have we nonetheless been consistently misled by fraudulent bits of information? And if so, is there anything we can do to make certain it will never happen again?

DECEPTION among nations is not of course a new subject in power politics. As early as the 16th century Machiavelli concluded that there were only two means for a nation to gain its objective from an unwilling adversary: force or fraud. Since the application of force entailed expending resources and taking serious risks, Machiavelli strongly recommended that a ruler should "never attempt to win by force what he might otherwise win by fraud." The basic economy of power that Machiavelli described is, if anything, even more relevant in an age of nuclear weapons.

To be successful, fraud requires changing an adversary's perceptions of reality. It is commonly employed in wartime to mislead an enemy into believing that a military force is either stronger or weaker than it is in reality; indeed, as the Chinese strategist Sun Tzu wrote in the 4th century B.C.E., "All warfare is based on deception." In peacetime, though its applications are far less obvious, fraud still remains an effective means of altering the geopolitical balance of power. These peacetime frauds are usually perpetrated on an adversary's intelligence-gathering system on the presumption that the fraudulent intelligence will eventually reach and influence decision-makers.

Consider, for example, one such case that took place in New York City in the 1960's and early 70's. It began when a KGB officer working at the United Nations Secretariat contacted the FBI and offered to betray the Soviet Union by supplying secret information. He claimed that the KGB had mistreated him by taking back part of his UN salary, and he asked the FBI to pay him for his services. The FBI accepted his terms and gave him the code name "Fedora." Since Fedora would continue to work for the KGB while also working for the FBI, he was considered to be a double agent.

Fedora told the FBI that the KGB had ordered him to organize a spy ring in New York that would ferret out American scientific secrets—especially those involving defense and missile technology. By reporting all the activities and targets of this scientific spying to the FBI, he could provide American intelligence with information about the priorities of Soviet intelligence. As the relationship developed, Fedora also acted as a "mole" in the KGB, and passed on a continuous flow of secret data.

Later that year, the FBI had another Soviet "walk-in," as a volunteer is called, from the UN. He identified himself as an officer in Soviet military intelligence, the GRU, and explained that he was in New York, under UN cover, attempting to ferret out American military secrets in overt literature. He also offered to work for the FBI as a double agent, and he was given the code name "Tophat."

For the next ten years, Fedora and Tophat provided the FBI with dovetailing bits of information on the development of Soviet weaponry which were brought at times by J. Edgar Hoover directly to the attention of the President and his National Security Adviser. Some of these reports were indeed responsible for provoking serious changes in the defense strategy of the United States. In 1969, for instance, Hoover in a personal briefing informed President Nixon that the FBI had established through super-secret sources (i.e., Fedora and Tophat) that the Soviet Union was on the brink of launching a crash program to develop chemical-biological weapons. Specifically, Fedora had learned that Soviet leaders had been shocked to discover that the United States had a decisive lead in this field and believed that even with a crash program it would take years to narrow the gap. It further appeared, according to Tophat, that Soviet military leaders were not eager to divert enormous resources into the research necessary for chemical weapons, and they were therefore requesting further intelligence assessments of the American chemical-warfare effort.

Just at the time this intriguing intelligence was received, President Nixon was weighing the merits of a unilateral cutback in the production of chemical and biological weapons. The reports from Fedora and Tophat now suggested that (with the Soviet Union presumably far behind in development) the United States could gain a definite advantage by freezing chemical and biological weapons at their existing levels. On November 25, 1969, President Nixon announced accordingly that the United States was ending production of these weapons in the hope that the Soviet Union would similarly stop its production. Shortly thereafter Fedora and Tophat reported to the FBI that the Soviet crash program had been abandoned. It was therefore assumed that the United States had retained its lead in these weapons.

Four years later, when Israel captured Soviet tanks and other equipment in the Yom Kippur war, U.S. intelligence found that it had greatly underestimated the Soviet capacity for chemical warfare. The captured weapons provided the first actual evidence of the development and the state of the art of Soviet chemical weapons and defenses, and the analysis of this equipment showed that the United States was unquestionably behind rather than ahead of the Soviet Union in chemical warfare. Moreover, by working backward from the state of manufacture of this equipment, it was further established that the Soviet Union had possessed this

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technology—and thus a lead—*before* 1969. Evidently, then, the reports of Fedora and Tophat had been inaccurate—and possibly fraudulent.

This and other developments led to a reassessment of the FBI's sources. The CIA had been suspicious of both Fedora and Tophat from the outset, and these disclosures reinforced its suspicions. And although FBI counterintelligence officials, such as Assistant Director William Sullivan, also doubted the credentials of Fedora and Tophat, J. Edgar Hoover insisted on accepting their reports as bona-fide intelligence. It was not until after Hoover's death, and a further reassessment, that the FBI admitted that both agents, who had by then returned to the Soviet Union, had actually been working under the control of the KGB and feeding the FBI misleading information.

THE practice of systematically channeling misleading information, such as that supplied by Fedora and Tophat, into an adversary's intelligence system for the purpose of warping its decision-making process is called "disinformation." Although the concept is ancient, the term originated with the German general staff when it created a "disinformation service" to mislead Germany's enemies in World War I. Unlike ordinary misinformation, which might be accidental and random, disinformation was the purposeful shaping of information to enhance the military strategy of the German general staff. While the German Disinformation Service restricted its scope of activities to sending misleading radio transmissions to the enemy, the purview of disinformation gradually expanded after the war.

Soviet intelligence very quickly adopted the idea of "*dezinformatsiya*" to its own purposes and redefined it, as a recent KGB manual discloses, in the following terms: "Strategic disinformation assists in the execution of state tasks and is directed at misleading the enemy concerning questions of state policy." As the manual makes abundantly clear, strategic disinformation is in both peacetime and wartime an instrument of Soviet policy. Just as Clausewitz defined war as the accomplishment of state policy by "the sword in place of the pen," disinformation returns the accomplishment of state policy in Soviet doctrine to the pen—albeit a poisoned one. And since strategic disinformation is inseparable from state policy, it is formulated at the highest level of the Kremlin. Indeed, according to General Jan Sejna, who had served on the Central Committee in Czechoslovakia, and who defected in 1968: "The Soviet Politburo approves the long-term global plan [for disinformation] for fifteen years and beyond."*

Whereas strategic disinformation is part and parcel of a "political plan" formulated by the Soviet Politburo, "tactical disinformation" is a mechanism designed and operated by the KGB itself to manipulate and control the adversary's interpretation of its own intelligence. Although there are numerous combinations and permutations available, the basic device for manipulation consists of a loop of communication channels connecting the KGB with the adversary's intelligence services. This loop requires an input channel, through which the disinformation messages are fed to the adversary, and a feedback channel, through which the adversary's response and interpretation of these messages are fed to the deceiver.

The input channels are relatively easy to organize. At a rudimentary level, disinformation messages can simply be put in the path of the adversary. Thus Soviet intelligence in the 1950's left disinformation documents in embassy safes in Washington knowing that the FBI made a practice of burglarizing and photographing the contents.

A more dependable channel for delivering messages to the enemy is a double agent, such as Fedora, who pretends to cooperate with enemy intellience in order to win its confidence. At times, when the message is of sufficient import, an intelligence agent may even be dispatched to "defect" physically in order to add to the credibility of the disinformation. In addition to agents, electronic taps and "bugs," or hidden microphones, can be used as input channels for disinformation if they are detected—and left in place. The effectiveness of such electronic channels will depend of course on the adversary's not realizing that its listening devices have been discovered.

The establishment of the feedback in the loop is a far more difficult enterprise. It has generally required penetrating the heart of the adversary's intelligence system by either planting a "mole" in position where he learns and reports back interpretations of the disinformation, or by intercepting and breaking vital intelligence codes. However, now that computerized encryption has rendered codebreaking all but impossible, agents in place, or moles, have become the chief means of feedback in the deception loop.

The KGB was able to maintain its Fedora-Top-

* Disinformation, which aims at extending state policy, is a very different concept in Soviet doctrine from propaganda. Whereas disinformation aims at misleading an enemy government into making a disadvantageous decision, propaganda aims at misleading public opinion so that it resists the advantageous decisions of its government. The audience for disinformation is thus government decision-makers, and the prime channel for reaching this audience is through the intelligence service upon which they rely for their secret information. The data itself are usually secret and, as a recent CIA study notes, "almost never receive public attention." Propaganda, on the other hand, is aimed at an audience of influential citizens. The main channel through which it reaches this audience is the media. By its very nature, propaganda involves public rather than secret knowledge.

While there has recently been a tendency to use the more novel term "disinformation" to describe the manipulation of the media, the collapsing of the distinction between disinformation and propaganda tends to confuse two very different sets of problems.

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hat deception for more than a decade precisely because it had recruited a mole inside the New York office of the FBI. According to William Sullivan, without an inside source, the KGB could not have constantly modified Fedora's messages so that they conformed to the expectations of the FBI. While Sullivan had traced the putative mole to the New York office, he was unable to single him out. "At the time I left the FBI in 1971, the Russians still had a man in our office and none of us knew who he was," he noted in his memoirs.

Feedback is an especially critical part of a continuing deception. Without it, the success of disinformation is problematic; with it, not only can the success of the deception be immediately ascertained but it can be modified to accommodate any of its failings.

LENIN himself articulated the governing principle of Soviet disinformation in the early 1920's. When his first intelligence chief, Felix Dzerzhinsky, asked him what sort of disinformation should be fed to the West, Lenin replied: "Tell them what they want to believe." Lenin, who had a natural genius for such manipulations, realized the futility of using the disinformation channels in an attempt to undermine the fierce anti-Communist beliefs of Western leaders. Instead, he recommended using these predispositions to the Soviet Union's advantage by designing the disinformation around the theme that Communism was failing. Since Western leaders wanted to believe that the Communist experiment would soon collapse, there was a strong disposition to accept the disinformation.

Lenin provided a credible context for the secret disinformation campaign by declaring a New Economic Policy (or NEP) in which pure Communism would be replaced by a mixed system of state socialism and private capitalism. He further invited foreign capitalists to the Soviet Union, and offered them concessions in mining and manufacturing that would replace failing Communist enterprises. Specifically, Lenin called in prominent Western businessmen and told them that Communism wasn't working in Russia.

Meanwhile, on the covert side, Soviet intelligence organized a device for funneling disinformation coinciding with this theme into the hands of Western intelligence services. This was a supposedly anti-Communist resistance group inside the Soviet Union called the "Trust"—a name not without irony since the sole purpose of the organization was to deceive those who trusted it. Representatives of the Trust contacted all the leading anti-Soviet organizations in exile in Europe and offered to help them steal Soviet secrets and arrange escapes for their relatives and associates inside Russia. Since the Trust was in reality a creature of the Soviet intelligence service, it was easily able to deliver all the services it promised. It thus soon managed to convince these émigré groups that it represented a powerful anti-Communist force with agents infiltrated throughout the Soviet government.

Once the Trust was accepted as credible, it began to parcel out pieces of secret information to the various anti-Communist groups which, in turn, sold the information to the Western intelligence services they were in contact with. Carefully orchestrated by Soviet intelligence, these pieces of disinformation tended to dovetail with and confirm each other. The main theme was that the Soviet government remained in power not because of the appeal of Communism, but because Western intervention had aroused Russian nationalism in support of the government. Presumably if foreign intervention subsided, Soviet officials and army officers would themselves overthrow the Communist government.

As Western governments came to accept this convenient thesis, they ceased planning troop landings, economic blockades, and less dramatic forms of harassment. Moreover, they dissuaded émigré groups based inside their borders from undertaking campaigns of sabotage and subversion within the Soviet Union, on the ground that such acts would have the unintended effect of delaying the overthrow of the government.

The Trust proved to be an enormous success as a channel for disinformation. Not only did it manage to quiet and anesthetize opposition to the Soviet Union by holding out the promise of an inside revolution; it also collected sums of money from nine Western intelligence services for the disinformation it provided which proved sufficient to finance the Trust itself as well as almost all the international activities of Soviet intelligence for six years.

Finally, in 1927, after the end of the NEP and the nationalization of almost all foreign concessions, Soviet intelligence liquidated the Trust by sending a false defector to Helsinki to reveal that it had been a fraud from the beginning. This revelation served the purpose of further demoralizing and confusing the anti-Soviet opposition.

Deceptions like the Trust involve a remarkable degree of cooperation, albeit unwitting, between the deceived and the deceiver. Like a form of intellectual jiujitsu, the disinformation takes full advantage of the weight of an adversary's predispositions in order to mislead it. If successfully deceived, an intelligence service views the messages it has received from the enemy as a triumphant coup, and it therefore can be expected to resist any subsequent efforts to debunk or discredit it (as the FBI later did for so long with Fedora and Tophat).

WITH the outbreak of World War II came a new reliance on intelligence —and its nemesis, disinformation. The radio sig-

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nals, electronic data, and coded messages that were intercepted to pinpoint the movements of military units could also be fabricated by disinformation experts in order to confuse and mislead rival intelligence services. Since both real intelligence and disinformation originate in the enemy camp, with the only difference that the former is meant to be kept secret and the latter disclosed, they are extraordinarily difficult to separate. In this sense, disinformation is analogous to cancerous cells which the body's immunological system cannot differentiate from healthy cells. The injection of electronic disinformation managed, if nothing else, to paralyze and confuse the gathering of crucial military intelligence.

Strategic deception was used by almost every participant in the war, with Britain and Germany each successful in manipulating and misleading adversaries through the use of controlled double agents and misleading radio transmissions.* As the war progressed, deception-planning staffs in Germany, England, America, and the Soviet Union were attached to the high command, and thereby became responsible for overall strategy. William R. Harris, an analyst at RAND and a leading expert on international deception, suggests that this development "laid the institutional foundation for the modern double-cross system." This "double cross" involved feeding false or biased data into enemy satellites, ground antennas, and other "national technical means," as this spying is euphemistically called. Harris writes:

> Once deception planning was part of the strategic planning process, the systematic targeting of an adversary's technical means of collection was inevitable. Unlike their counterparts in the field, the planners at the political centers had access to the most sensitive counterintelligence resources. These resources included access, through decryption of enemy ciphers, to key intelligence and decision-making channels. This feedback led deception planners to the targeting of technical indicators, and especially those that were most credible to an adversary.

Soviet intelligence in World War II lost little time in exploiting the technical capacity of its enemies to intercept Soviet communications. When it found that German intelligence had tapped into the cable links between the Soviet embassy in Tokyo and Moscow, and had broken the diplomatic ciphers, it neither closed down the tapped line nor switched to using the same kind of "one-time" codes which it used elsewhere (and were unbreakable). Instead, it turned the compromised communications to its own advantage by arranging for its diplomats to transmit disinformation messages in the code that it knew full well had been broken. Feedback on German interpretations of this Soviet disinformation was supplied by a group of moles who had been recruited in German intelligence.†

In general, the Soviets proved extremely proficient at this new species of disinformation. For example, in the summer of 1944, the Soviet deception staff managed through fake radio traffic and double agents to persuade German intelligence that the Soviet offensive would come on the flanks in Finland and Rumania, and not in the center of the front in Byelorussia. Even though the Soviets amassed an army of 1,500,000 troops in Byelorussia, German intelligence was by this time so focused on the flanks that it failed to see this gigantic army. The Soviet offensive, which swept through an area the size of West Germany, caught the Germans totally by surprise.

THE wartime refinement of disinformation provided Stalin with an extraordinarily useful instrument for waging the cold war. Swords could again be replaced by poisoned pens. In the immediate postwar years, Soviet disinformation focused on undermining American efforts to organize opposition to Soviet rule in Eastern Europe. In 1951, for example, Soviet intelligence organized a fictitious underground "army" in Poland known by the acronym WIN (which stood in Polish for "Freedom and Independence"). Working through Polish exiles in London, WIN contacted the CIA and British Intelligence (SIS) and represented itself as a group commanding thousands of armed guerrillas in Poland. These claims were reinforced by a number of double agents under Soviet control, and by interceptions of police and militia radio broadcasts in Poland, which seemed to confirm that Soviet and Polish units were being harassed by guerrillas.

Both the CIA and British SIS accepted WIN as a bona-fide anti-Communist "army." Thus for more than a year, the CIA parachuted to WIN forces in Poland large caches of weapons, electronic equipment, and gold bullion. It also put its own agents and Polish dissidents directly in touch with WIN commanders. In December 1952, after arresting all the agents and dissidents who had contacted WIN, Polish security forces announced over the radio sufficient details about WIN to make it clear to the CIA that it had been duped by an intelligence fraud.

The WIN deception achieved a double success: it lured virtually all the resistance groups inside

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* For the British deception that concealed the time, place, and purpose of the Normandy landings in 1944, see Anthony Cave Brown, *Bodyguard of Lies* (Harper & Row, 1976). The British use of double agents for disinformation is detailed in J.D. Masterman, *The Double Cross System* (Yale University Press, 1972). For a full account of the German use of disinformation to confuse Stalin over the purpose of the movement of over 100 divisions to the Soviet border, see Barton Whaley, *Codeword Barbarossa* (MIT Press, 1973).

† Reinhard Gehlen, *The Service* (World Publishing, 1972), p. 70.

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Poland into a trap; and it thoroughly demoralized —and discredited—the exile groups outside Poland. The fact that the CIA had inadvertently financed the deception with gold bullion was an added bonus to Soviet intelligence.

ALTHOUGH deceptions may employ a highly convoluted series of actions, they proceed from a basic theme that involves misrepresenting either strength or weakness. "I make the enemy see my strengths as weaknesses and weaknesses as strengths," a commentator notes in Sun Tzu's *Art of War*. In the case of both the Trust deception of the 1920's and the Polish Home Army deception in the late 1940's, the Soviet Union concealed its political strength (and capacity for repression) behind a mask of political weakness and internal strife. This theme was reversed in the 1950's, at least in the area of strategic weapons, when Soviet leaders began misrepresenting their weakness in intercontinental bombers and missiles as strength. Not only did Soviet intelligence attempt to mislead U.S. intelligence into overestimating Soviet bombers and missile capacity through the usual orchestration of double agents, leaks from Soviet scientists at conferences, and official statements; it also staged elaborate "fly-bys" of bombers at parades in which the same planes circled repeatedly over the reviewing stand in order to give an exaggerated impression of strength.

During this period, Soviet intelligence also attempted to give the United States an impression of strength in its capacity to manufacture nuclear weapons. A German double agent, Heinz Felfe, actually under the control of the KGB, provided the CIA with a high-grade sample of uranium ore supposedly from mines in Czechoslovakia which led the CIA to revise upward its estimates of the number of Soviet nuclear bombs. The Soviet projection of intercontinental strength, which was characterized as the "missile gap" in the election of 1960, succeeded in making the threats and bluster of Khrushchev more credible. Moreover, by focusing the attention of U.S. intelligence on the intercontinental threat, the Soviets diverted attention from the rapid expansion of their medium-range bomber and missile forces that were deployed against Eurasian targets during this same period.

A few years later, reversing the process once again to convey an impression of weakness, the Soviets misled the CIA into the belief that Soviet missiles—and especially the giant SS-9—lacked accurate guidance systems. From this it followed that these missiles were not a threat to our land-based ICBM force (the Minuteman complexes), and thus there was no need to disperse or reinforce the silos, or to attempt to develop an antiballistic missile. Given these assumptions about the relative inaccuracy of the Soviet guidance system, Secretary of Defense McNamara concluded, as he testified in 1963:

> It is clear that the Soviets do not have anything like the number of missiles necessary to knock out our Minuteman force, nor do they appear to have any present plans to acquire such a capacity. If they were to undertake the construction and deployment of a large number of high-yield missiles, we would probably have knowledge of this and would have ample time to expand our Minuteman force, or to disperse it more widely.

As it turned out, McNamara, along with the entire American strategic establishment, was dead wrong. Without "knowledge" by U.S. intelligence, the Soviet Union did proceed to deploy a highly accurate force that threatened to overwhelm the Minuteman deterrent. How could U.S. intelligence, with all its satellites, electronic sensors, and other resources, have been led into missing or misinterpreting such a massive development in Soviet missile technology?

Albert Wohlstetter has suggested that the CIA estimators tended to shape ambiguities in their data toward a preconceived theory they held about Soviet strategy, and the pressure toward "conformity" and "consensus" overrode hostile evidence. Such self-deception on the part of the CIA analysts does not, however, preclude the possibility of their having been misled by disinformation. Indeed, when a feedback channel exists, preconceptions are an important ingredient in the perpetration of an intelligence fraud ("Tell them what they want to believe"). And there were at least two such feedback channels in the early 60's, in the form of moles who were eventually identified.

One was Jack E. Dunlap, employed at the headquarters of the super-secret National Security Agency (NSA) as an analyst with top-secret clearance and also as the chauffeur for its chief-of-staff, Major General Garrison B. Coverdale. In this latter capacity, he was permitted to drive one of the few "no-inspection" cars off the closely-guarded base which he used to smuggle out vast quantities of secret documents, including some that concerned the monitoring of Soviet missile testing. After the leak was discovered in 1963, Dunlap committed suicide.

Soviet intelligence also had an unparalleled channel of feedback at the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff in the person of Colonel William Whalen. Colonel Whalen, who had been recruited by Soviet intelligence in the late 1950's when he was serving as a military liaison officer, was the intelligence adviser to the Army Chief of Staff, and in this capacity he had a legitimate "need to know" on virtually any question concerning U.S. (or Soviet) intelligence. He could thus tap the combined intelligence resources of the CIA, FBI, and NSA, as well as military intelligence, on any matter of presumed interest to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Up until his detection and arrest in 1963, he supplied whatever infor-

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mation the KGB required concerning American interpretation of intelligence information intercepted from the Soviet Union. With this in hand, the KGB could constantly adjust and modify its stream of disinformation.

In short, since the intelligence establishment was basing its estimates of the accuracy of Soviet guidance systems on data intercepted from Soviet transmitters, which the Soviets knew were being monitored, and on reports from double agents under KGB control, self-deception could only have been one element of a well-executed scheme of disinformation.

To be sure, vital pieces of the puzzle were unavailable until the early 1970's when new and better methods were developed of photographing and analyzing the craters caused by the impact of Soviet warheads. These revealed a profound discrepancy between the estimates of missile accuracy garnered from the interception of Soviet telemetry and the actual degree of accuracy as measured by this new photoreconnaissance method. There could be no doubt that American intelligence had been misled by disinformation.

AT THE root of the entire problem was a small device that measured gravity called an accelerometer. Soviet missiles carried three accelerometers, and it had been assumed that these devices performed the critically important task of determining the exact position of the missile in flight. If these accelerometers were even a shade inaccurate, the missile could not accurately hit its target. Since the CIA was able to intercept the signals from these accelerometers during tests through its ground antennas in Iran and Pakistan, it believed that it had a constant indicator of accuracy. Although the CIA presumed that Soviet intelligence was aware that its telemetry was being intercepted, it also assumed that these vital data could not be falsified because they were needed for guiding the missile.

Reassessments by the RAND Corporation and other highly specialized think tanks under contract to the CIA and the Department of Defense showed, however, that since the three accelerometers provided redundant instrumentation, it was technically possible for the Soviets deliberately to distort the data from one accelerometer without losing the ability to monitor the missile test accurately. Indeed, a reanalysis of the telemetry data seemed to indicate just such a "systematic bias"—or disinformation. After studying this telemetry problem, William Harris of RAND testified before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. He concluded:

> With an understanding of the technical indicators and methods of U.S. estimation of ballistic missile accuracy, the Soviets managed to underrepresent the accuracy of intercontinental ballistic missiles. . . . Only systematic biasing of technical indicators would produce the apparently large errors in guidance. . . .

The "technical indicators" he referred to were of course the telemetry from the on-board accelerometers. Assuming that the Soviets realized that we were underestimating their missile accuracy—and there was sufficient feedback from public as well as intelligence sources during this period—the continued biasing of the telemetry could only have been disinformation.

In addition to thus "double-crossing" our electronic devices, the Soviets, through the activities of double agents under KGB control in the U.S., kept the attention of U.S. intelligence focused on the accelerometers. Fedora, for example, told the FBI that the Soviet Union was having severe problems constructing missile-guidance systems. Then, in the mid-60's, he reported to the FBI that the KGB had been assigned the task of buying an accelerometer from an American company. As he was responsible for stealing secrets on scientific and missile developments, this KGB request came under his purview. A few weeks later, a Soviet employee at the UN named Vadim Isakov visited a dealer in surplus government equipment in Paterson, New Jersey; producing a shopping list, he offered to buy a $6,000 accelerometer made by the American Bosch Arma Company, a miniature computer, and a titanium pressure vehicle—devices that were all necessary to missile guidance. The FBI, which had the entire Soviet buying mission under surveillance, found that Isakov seemed particularly anxious about the accelerometers. Fedora meanwhile was asked by the FBI to inquire into the need for this special equipment on a trip he was making to Moscow. When he returned to New York, he told the FBI the equipment was needed because of a failure in the Soviet missile program.

The pieces fit neatly together, and the FBI liaison duly passed on the evidence of the Soviet missile failure to the CIA's Directorate of Science and Technology which found that it dovetailed with the analysis of the telemetry intercepts. Different channels of secret information thus seemed to corroborate one another.

It was not until late 1974 that the CIA began an agonizing examination of the possibility that its satellites and antennas were being "double-crossed" by Soviet disinformation. A special "reading room" for this super-secret data was set up for CIA counterintelligence specialists at the Directorate of Science and Technology. Before the problem could be even initially explored, the entire counterintelligence staff was shaken up—and most of its key members forcibly retired—in the wake of the firing (for other reasons) of its chief, James Angleton, in December 1974.

DISINFORMATION, then, emerges as the only plausible explanation of how the Soviets achieved a strategic breakout of the missile

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stalemate. The problem for the Soviet Union in the early 60's was to increase its vulnerable and numerically inferior missile force to a threatening level—without provoking the United States similarly to increase, or defend, its existing missile force. Moreover, the Soviet Union had to effect this build-up at a time when all its silo-construction and missile-testing programs were being closely monitored by the cameras and sensors of U.S. spy satellites. It was able to accomplish this seemingly impossible task because U.S. intelligence gravely underestimated the truly threatening aspect of the Soviet missiles—their potential for accuracy—on the basis of intercepted test data and the reports of double agents that had been deliberately falsified and that played into preconceptions about the Soviet Union's technological capacity.

The likelihood that such a deception could have been detected in a contemporaneous time frame seems remote. Disinformations that mimic prevailing preconceptions contain their own camouflage. Moreover, as we have seen, such deceptions rapidly become entangled and fused with the bureaucratic interests of the intelligence services themselves, and any effort to attack them becomes perceived as an attack on the intelligence service itself. For example, to ferret out evidence of the missile deception, it would have been necessary to call into question the credibility of such highly productive sources as the satellites, antennas, and the moles working within Soviet intelligence. Most career officers who tried to do this found their careers at an end.

THUS, while Congress and the informed public have been under the impression that satellites and electronic wizardry can be relied upon for foolproof intelligence, the story of the misestimates of Soviet missile accuracy demonstrates that these "national technical means" are at least as susceptible to Soviet deception as less exotic means of intelligence-gathering. The persistent denial of the problem of disinformation serves only to increase its chances of success. And without a radical reorganization of the kind that is opposed by the CIA bureaucracy, it is unlikely that any effective measures can be taken to prevent our intelligence services and ultimately our national leaders from being "double-crossed" again. Their continuing vulnerability to Soviet disinformation casts the most serious doubt on whether "national technical means" can ever be sufficient to verify Soviet compliance with any new arms-control agreement.

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The Delegitimation of Israel

Ruth R. Wisse

WHAT was it about European Jewry that made possible its extermination? Historians, psychologists, theologians, thoughtful people everywhere will continue to ask this question and to grope for partial answers. For no less troubling than the barbarism of the Germans and other Europeans who assisted in the destruction was their prior success in selecting the Jews as the target of their murderous enmity. How did it come about that the Jews, who were neither bellicose nor numerous, and who had contributed not a little to European well-being, were transformed into the very essence of satanic evil—the image which the Nazis projected onto them and which so much of Europe seemed to accept as true?

The history of European anti-Semitism is not a study in mere opposition to Jews. Religions and nations have opposed one another since the record of mankind began. We take it for granted that religions stand in competition with each other, and that nations vie for territory and influence. Opposition to the Jews was something else; from the beginning of the Christian era, it took the special form of delegitimation.

"Since the days of the Church Fathers," the late historian H.H. Ben-Sasson has written, "the Church had claimed that the true image befitting Israel, which had refused to recognize Jesus and had slain him, was that of Cain who had murdered his brother." Ben-Sasson traces the evolution of this idea in the theory of Jewish "servitude" in the Middle Ages, which justified the humiliation of the Jews on theological grounds and made them, in practice, increasingly prey to the whim of political authority. Protected by charters with limited rights of residence and economic activity, they were granted only temporary exemption from the punishment that was considered deservedly theirs.

One might have thought the negative definition of the Jew would have disappeared with the Enlightenment challenge to Christianity, or with the Emancipation; but it merely assumed a more elegant, rationalist form. It was now considered reasonable for the Jew to be granted equal status as a citizen; in return, it was considered reasonable to expect him to forfeit his special status as a Jew. When Jews, "intransigent" and "ungrateful," persisted in their distinctiveness, anti-Semitism was the logical reaction. Modern anti-Semitism, writes the historian Arthur Hertzberg, is "chastisement for the sin of imperfect assimilation and the goad toward the messianic day when the Jews, by completely refashioning themselves in the image of proper Westerners, would have won the acceptance that they then would merit."

By the end of the 19th century it was obvious to Jews and non-Jews of both Western and Eastern Europe that the "Jewish question" was not about to evaporate. The delegitimation of the Jew had become one of Christianity's most lasting legacies to the modern world, infecting the political Left and Right alike. For socialists, the Jew became the symbol of evil capitalism; for nationalists, of racial defilement. By the time Adolf Hitler isolated the Jew as the corrupting feature of European civilization, he was able to draw on a considerable body of both Christian and post-Christian mythology, which he then translated into a positive ideal—extermination. In Hitler's formulation, if the Jews were illegitimate and evil, destroying them was not murder but a benefaction to the continent and the world.

Long before the emergence of the Third Reich, European Jews had recognized their vulnerability in secularized Christian societies, where distrust of them was no longer tempered by the religious inhibitions that had characterized the Church at its best, or by the economic requirements of feudalism which had preserved for them a designated place in the hierarchy. Whether out of positive attraction or an instinct for collective survival, modern Jews tried to adapt the emerging ideologies of socialism and nationalism to their own situation.

There were many creative thinkers among the Jews in these years, and almost as many proffered solutions to the "Jewish question." Common to all was the desire for a normalization of status among the peoples of the world, so that Jews should no longer be held subject to a double

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standard of judgment. Zionists of all factions placed the main emphasis on normalization through territory: a people with its own land would be guaranteed equal status among nations. The socialists aimed at normalization through socioeconomic transformation: Jews would be at home in the world once divisiveness gave way to class solidarity. Though many Jewish socialists tried to reconcile their particularist and universalist loyalties, they were never rewarded with the harmony they sought.

The pressure of anti-Semitism was not only greater in modern times, it also put a greater internal pressure on Jews. The traditional Jew derived his sense of legitimacy from his religion, which provided its own deep and serene justification. But when a modern, secular Jew, having jettisoned the armor of his faith, was attacked as illegitimate, he felt obligated to prove his worthiness. How could this be done? The contest was hardly equal. The Germans, Poles, Ukrainians, among others, were seeking to eliminate a minority from within their midst, while the Jews wanted simply to be allowed to live as that minority. Perhaps it was only natural that the aggression of anti-Semitism from without should have generated habits of defensiveness and apology within.

By the 1930's, before the combined onslaught of fascist anti-Semitism and, in the East, Communist efforts at deracination, Jews found themselves at a loss to refute charges that were becoming ever more twisted and venal. Since the disseminators of the hatred remained beyond their reach, Jews redirected the better part of their efforts at self-justification, which also meant, in practice, denouncing those of their fellow Jews whom they considered politically misguided, a provocation to their enemies, chauvinists, fascists, traitors, collaborators, and all the rest. There is a demonstrable correspondence between the pitch of the propaganda directed against them and the factional fury among Jews themelves.

This progressive demoralization is not difficult to explain in its historical context, but it is not a noble story. If, after the war, the heroic struggle of the Warsaw Ghetto was taken by survivors as the symbol by which the destruction of the Jews should be remembered, the impulse derived at least in part from a desire to erase the memory of the years of internecine conflict that preceded it. As for the record of American Jews during this period, it can be found in the pages of the Yiddish and Anglo-Jewish press until 1943. No one will ever boast of it.

THE war against the Jews, as Lucy S. Dawidowicz has called what others enshroud in the term "Holocaust," was from the point of view of its perpetrators and collaborators successful beyond belief. In the aftermath of the war, during a period of international realignment, when the dead still seemed to haunt the conscience, the Zionist goal of Jewish normalization through territorial stability was realized. The state of Israel was declared and, though left to fend for itself, was welcomed by most of the community of nations.

In theory, that should have been the end of anti-Semitism, and the Jews may in any case be pardoned for feeling that they had earned a moment of rest in history. But the Arab states did not acknowledge the existence of the Jewish state. They refused to accept partition and they refused to accept its consequence. In the intervening decades they have launched repeated wars against Israel and ignored repeated opportunities for peace. Even the peace treaty of unprecedented generosity which Israel has struck with Egypt has failed to move the other rejectionist states from their insistence on Arab hegemony and Arab hegemony alone in the Middle East.

In addition to resorting to force of arms, the Arabs and their abettors on the international scene have tried to delegitimate the Jewish state in other ways—to accomplish in the political arena what Christianity did on the theological plane. UN Resolution 3379 equating Zionism with racism, passed by the General Assembly in 1975 to its eternal disgrace, institutionalized anti-Semitism in international politics. Allegations of Israel's racism, and blatant anti-Semitic slander, are by now so common at the United Nations and other international gatherings as to attract little notice. As Michael Novak, the United States Representative to the Commission on Human Rights, recently observed, they are a form of Orwellian speech, which "uses words to mean their opposite, and then repeats such words over and over, in the hope that truth can be manufactured from untruth solely by repetition." The clear purpose of this doublespeak, Novak went on, "is to undermine the legitimacy and the existence of the state of Israel."

Sober people think they can guard against such distortions, but the success of the Arabs in their campaign of doublespeak is everywhere visible. They have transformed their obdurate refusal to accept Israel into an alleged Israeli war of aggression against *them*. They have won from Western governments a policy of evenhandedness—which dictates that as much weight be given to the war against the existence of Israel as to the struggle to maintain it. Normally, when countries go to war—Britain and Argentina, for example—each acknowledges the legitimacy of the other's existence even as they both try to change the balance of power between them. The Arab rejectionists have yet to acknowledge Israel's existence; a policy of evenhandedness applied to the conflict between them amounts to a license to pursue Israel's destruction.

The cynicism of Arab policy would provoke indignation except that a further achievement of

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Orwellian speech, when it is used long enough, is that it withers the habit of indignation, and even turns it against the victim. Thus, Saudi Crown Prince Fahd could speak last August of a "just and comprehensive settlement" in the Middle East and not raise an eyebrow when he later denied that he had ever intended to recognize Israel. A London-based Arab newspaper financed by Saudi Arabia, *Al Shark el-Assouti*, was more honest in saying that "one should recognize the Israelis, but only in their tomb." Thirty-four years after its establishment, and with the exception of Egypt, Israel has yet to be dignified by its neighbors with the simple fact of recognition. Its neighbors feel free to call for the destruction of Israel without concern for political repercussions or even moral censure. And the same Western calculations of expediency that grant the Arab oil-producing countries a near-immunity from criticism also allow them to spread their lies as truth.

ARAB progress in delegitimating Israel is not limited to the United Nations. American public opinion is still very much in support of Israel, and will continue to be, so long as both countries remain proud and independent democracies. But Arab propaganda has made great inroads on this continent, with an inevitably damaging consequence to Israel.

A recent report on centers for Middle East studies at American universities, deliberately moderate in its tone, exposes a sharp trend toward the delegitimation of Israel at the very heart of academic study of the area. The report, prepared for the American Jewish Committee, deals with seven of the largest centers, all supported by heavy federal funding and some by gifts from Arab governments or pro-Arab corporations. As the obvious training ground of teachers, government workers, and businessmen, these graduate programs shape the knowledge and views of future experts and decision-makers.

The report finds that there is a general absence of courses on Israel or Zionism in the curricula of the Middle East centers and that Israel is omitted from or minimized in the literature put out by some of the centers. The numbers of Jewish graduate students in general Middle East programs are dwindling; to avoid the often inimical atmosphere of the Middle East centers, such graduate students tend to cluster instead in Jewish studies programs, "primarily in cultural or in purely linguistic areas." The centers themselves increasingly manifest the subliminal if not the overt influence of their sources of income.*

Part of the imbalance can be traced to the decision of the federal government to exclude Hebrew from those languages designated as essential to the national defense and security, and thus deserving of federal aid. The original argument was that sufficient numbers of students, mainly Jewish, would take Hebrew anyway. In fact, however, this denial of federal funding in an otherwise very heavily subsidized area has meant a near-exclusion of Hebrew-language students from Middle East programs. At the University of Michigan, for example, where one of the largest of these programs is located, there were 336 undergraduate enrollments in Hebrew in 1980, mostly at the introductory level, but only 4 graduate enrollments. By contrast, the number of undergraduates and graduates studying Arabic was almost equal, 124 and 109; of the twenty National Defense Education Act fellowships, the bulk were for graduate students of Arabic.

The lack of graduate students specializing in Israel and Zionism, or incorporating such study as part of their curriculum, is only the smaller part of the problem. More serious by far is the redefinition of the Middle East as an area in which Israel does not necessarily figure. What does it mean for a Middle East program to be "pro-Israel," as Berkeley's was reputed to be before its radical reorganization in 1976? It means that Israel is considered part of the Middle East and is reflected in the academic study of the center. What does it mean for such a program to be "evenhanded"? It means the virtual elimination of Israel from the curriculum—just as being "evenhanded" in international politics means, as we have seen, giving serious regard to the aim of eliminating Israel physically. Thus, when Berkeley's Middle East program was "pro-Israel" it produced, between 1974 and 1976, a total of six dissertations on Israeli history, anthropology, and political science. Since it turned "evenhanded" in 1976 there has been no sign of a single social-science dissertation on contemporary Israel.

The attitude of faculty to this corruption of the academic enterprise reflects the difficulty of countering a campaign of delegitimation. Liberal professors, with their laudable commitment to intellectual freedom, see no reason why the "Arab cause" should not receive as much play as the Israeli cause. Perhaps within the category of normal intellectual and territorial conflict they would be correct; indeed, one of the great gains of Arab propaganda has been to define the Middle East conflict as "normal" in this sense. But as long as the Arab cause remains the destruction of the state of Israel, the elimination of a neighbor state, the academy that bends to this bias gives license to intentions of genocide. The ideal of the university is based on mutual respect for ideas and

* "Middle East Centers at Selected American Universities," by Gary S. Schiff. In a recent development, Harvard University accepted $1 million from a Saudi businessman for a professorship in Arab studies even though the gift was linked by the donor to the appointment of a known PLO sympathizer to a research position at Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies (New York *Times*, June 6, 1982).

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persons, and true liberals are those with the courage to uphold that ideal.

THE discrediting of Israel proceeds through isolation and omission, as in the case of the Middle East centers; contrariwise, it also proceeds through an unceasing barrage of attention, mostly from the media. There are many reasons for the volume of attention, not least among them the availability of information on Israel as compared with the general dearth of information about all other countries in the area. But there are other, less neutral reasons. The difficulty encountered in filming and then showing *Death of a Princess*, a rather mild documentary on the rough justice of Saudi Arabia, is not likely to encourage others to expose that country's weaknesses.

Media pressure on Israel no doubt attests to the press freedoms guaranteed there, as opposed to the absolute censorship practiced by its neighbors, but the result has been a double standard of judgment which soon becomes an instrument of incrimination. This takes its most egregious form among liberal editorial writers and columnists supposedly concerned with helping Israel live up to its moral promise and with protecting it from its own "suicidal folly." A longstanding practitioner of this art of solicitous incrimination is Anthony Lewis of the New York *Times*, who plays the good cop to the Arab states' bad cop by helpfully exposing alleged Israeli malfeasance with an air of charitable concern.

On a recent trip to the Middle East Lewis sought out local critics of the Israeli government so that he could bare before his readers all the unpleasant facts that Israel (like any open society) can yield. A victim of Lewis's strictures later described this method of "investigative reporting" as a simple pattern of prejudice: "If they look at our water problems, then we are stealing the Arab wells. If they look at our hospitals, then we are letting Arab babies die while saving ours in the Hadassah respirators." Reading Lewis lately, one wonders how long it will be before he will be accusing the Israelis of *poisoning* the wells.

Lewis's most recent effort at improving Israel's wayward conduct concerned the subject of alleged book-banning by Israeli occupation authorities in Gaza and what was, between 1922 and King Hussein's greedy invasion of Jerusalem in 1967, the West Bank of Jordan. Quoting Justice Brandeis, "the great American Zionist of his day," Lewis accused the Israeli authorities of various acts of censorship, including the banning of Palestinian poetry because it contains nationalist images. All this, he wrote, is part of Israel's attempt to suppress political feeling among the Palestinians, part of the "apparatus of repression in the occupied territories." Lewis concluded with the twisted logic that has become his trademark:

> In this country too there are those who would silence the truth about the occupation. Things as bad or worse happen in other countries, they say. To criticize any Israeli policy is to weaken that harassed state; people should stop finding fault with Israel.
>
> How Justice Brandeis would have scorned such arguments. He did not work for a Jewish state so it could be compared with the tyrannies of the earth; he expected it to be a beacon of freedom. He knew that wise government does not flourish in silence; it needs truth, however painful. And he would see now, in the West Bank and Gaza, *proof that repression breeds hate* (emphasis added).

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, taking the defensive—unfortunately either its fated or its adopted role—issued a point-by-point refutation of Lewis's charges, which were based on sources he did not check in the first place but simply lifted from the writing of a local opposition critic. Melvin Lasky, editor of the British journal, *Encounter*, who was alerted to Lewis's article because of the mischief it had done in *Egyptian* intellectual circles, determined to get to the root of the matter. He found the entire charge to be based on misinformation and error which had been rectified years earlier, as Lewis could easily have determined had he not been intent on believing, and repeating, the worst.

ACTUALLY, it is not Israel's but Lewis's abuse of freedom which should be at issue here. By what moral right does an American journalist exploit a country's democratic guarantees of free speech to smear it with allegations he has made no effort to check? And if freedom of political expression among the *Arabs* is in question, there is only one point to be made: the great irony of the Middle East, if this new disciple of Justice Brandeis has ever noticed, is that Arabs throughout Israel, emphatically including the occupied territories, enjoy greater freedom of expression and access to information than in any Arab country in the world.

Why, if Lewis is so concerned for the Palestinian poets, did he not investigate their political rights when he was in Jordan? Hath not an Arab eyes? Shall the students and writers of Arab countries, where there are no Jews to "oppress" them with the rights of free speech, and no Jewish critics to needle the government on their behalf, be doomed to a lifetime of self-censorship and silence? It is the peculiar evil of this double standard of judgment not merely to apply an absolute moral criterion to the Jews alone, and use it as a bludgeon against the Jewish state, but to discard moral standards altogether when it comes to other nations in the region.

When Mobil and Aramco try to pretty up the Arab position, at least one knows their objectives and their justification. Their business is oil. Their suppliers must be wooed. Their economic interests in the Arab states outweigh any consideration they may have for the state of Israel. Business sometimes makes such shabby compromises in the name of business.

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Lewis's voluntary enlistment in the war of delegitimation against Israel has no such obvious basis, but his capitulation to the Arabs is no less obsequious. The sign of it is that he twists historical facts into the shape of the big lie, for the Israeli presence in the West Bank is not the cause of Arab hatred, as in Lewis's corrupted formula, but its *result*. The policies of Begin, indeed the fact that Begin was elected to head the government of Israel, are the consequence of Arab intentions, not the cause of them. But in deference to the greater strength and obduracy of the Arab rejectionists in the region, Lewis's political pleasure, immoral though it be, is to urge concessions on Israel. The political claims of the Arabs he accepts at face value, while of the Israelis he demands that they prove their moral right to exist, "as a beacon of freedom"—or else.

Just as the cycle of hatred and rejection began with the Arabs, so it will have to be resolved by the Arabs. The American "liberal" press would do well, in one respect, to pay heed to Edward Said's chidings on the folly of thinking others too exotic to be held accountable. The Arabs deserve to be judged by no less stringent a set of expectations than the Israelis. They deserve to be bound by the same ideals, the same standard of morality. Far from resenting the moral scrutiny of such as Anthony Lewis, the friends of Israel are unwilling to be its sole beneficiaries. Since the conflict in the Middle East will be ended when the Arabs decide to end it, it is time they be credited where credit is, undeniably, due.

UNHAPPILY, the greatest gains in the Arab war of delegitimation are in evidence among American Jews, some of whom have begun to see themselves through the eyes of their accusers, and to bow to the accusation. The rapid demoralization of Jews in the face of anti-Zionism attests to the dangerous level the abuse has reached. It also shows the depth of the influence of the past, for many have yet to achieve the simple self-respect that has been eluding the Jews collectively since the dawn of modernity.

To be sure, when the vulnerability of Israel is directly involved, as in the case of the sale of sophisticated weaponry to Saudi Arabia, American Jews act persuasively and effectively, even if they are not always successful against competing lobbies and far greater resources of influence than they can muster.* But against the campaign to delegitimate Israel, American Jews have been impotent and silent.

On college campuses, even those with large and vocal Jewish populations, there are more and more unopposed attacks on Israel. PLO pamphlets flood the dormitories. Exhibits of Israeli "aggression" are presented under the guise of Arab culture. In the classroom itself there is systematic dissemination of libelous falsehood, which has been noted and documented by dozens of witnesses who say they do not consider it important enough to publicize and expose, but who, one suspects, are actually afraid to commit themselves to the process of sustained prosecution. At international and academic conferences, the terms "Zionist-racist" and "Zionist-fascist" are shrugged off as unexceptional by Jewish participants who pretend the slurs do not warrant public objection, but who are more likely embarrassed to stand up and defend their people's dignity.

Of the United Nations resolution on Zionism/racism, which forces Jews into the position of Cain not in the eyes of Christianity alone but within the entire community of nations, many American Jews pretend to take no note. "Only Jews pay attention to the United Nations," a Jewish intellectual answered when asked why he did not take a stand against the defamation. Yet the UN is not a parochial playpen, and real enemies do not evaporate when ignored. Instead of tirelessly challenging defamatory libels whenever they occur, so that none can hurl them with impunity, Jews have too often adopted the simpler tactic of silence—with the consequence that they have forfeited much ground in the propaganda battle to discredit Zionism.

SOME, however, have felt the edge of assault so keenly they have begun to speak after all—in the language of their debasers. Organized opposition to Israel government policy on the part of American Jews began, in fact, about the same time as the UN resolution defining Zionism as a form of racism. Ironically, this opposition has always lauded itself for daring to break a community-wide "silence" concerning Israel's misdeeds. When Breira, a college-based group of American Jews, began advocating Jewish criticism of Israel five years ago, it claimed heroically to be "breaking a taboo." This formulation has been adopted by each successor to Breira, which disbanded as an organization but bequeathed its program to a much broader constituency.

A World Jewish Congress report on the *Implications of Israel-Arab Peace* (sic!), conceived in 1979 and issued in the winter of 1981, echoes much of the Breira platform, incorporating too the notion of its own courageousness. The report compliments itself on relieving the pent-up pressures of self-restraint—restraint not from criticism of the Arabs (which would have been courageous indeed) but from criticism of Israel. According to the report the most important trend in recent years has been the increasing strain in the relation of

* See Murray Friedman, "AWACS and the Jewish Community," COMMENTARY, April 1982, and the articles by Steven Emerson in the *New Republic*, "The Petrodollar Connection" (February 17, 1982) and "The Aramco Connection" (May 19, 1982).

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American Jews with Israel. No connection is made, however, between the oil crisis and rising Arab influence in America, between rising Arab influence in America and consequent pressure on Israel, between pressure on Israel and the strain on those who feel obliged to defend an increasingly unpopular cause. Instead, the analysis treats the struggle for Israel and Zionism as though the faults of the Jews were the reason for the enmity being directed against them. In this way certain American Jews manage to evade the unpleasant and difficult task of upholding Israel's right to self-determination, and to call themselves heroes in the process.

At first, Jewish groups were still hesitant about embarking upon this program, although from the outset the American press loved the idea of man bites dog—Jews versus Israel. At the 1979 General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, the largest working gathering of Jews in America, among hundreds of workshops and sessions reflecting every cultural, religious, organizational, and political concern, the New York *Times* featured only an impromptu briefing called by Peace Now representatives, the successors of Breira in America, to encourage open criticism of Israel. That pattern of "coverage" has never changed. American Jewish critics of Israel, emboldened by media acclaim, now regularly call into question the morality of the rest of the Jewish community, which is "silent" in the face of Israeli miscreancy. This has had its inevitable effect. "When I'm accused of standing up for Israel," a professor said at a recent meeting of the local chapter of the Canadian Professors for Peace in the Middle East, "I no longer know what to say in my defense."

American Jewish attempts to discredit the policies of the Begin government obviously take pains to disavow any hostility to Israel as a whole, but they cannot help serving the purposes of such hostility. In the first place, since Begin heads a democratic state, he cannot be discredited without calling into question the country that has elected him. The critics, unable to deal effectively with this knot, end by falsifying the facts and impugning Israeli democracy; they ignore the wide base of support that Likud enjoys on university campuses and in the army, and they assert that Begin was put into power by North African immigrants, Soviet émigrés, and religious Jews, as if these voters, on account of their ethnic origins and beliefs, were untrustworthy at the polls. The implications of this line of argument should be obvious to democracy's proponents and opponents alike.

More disturbing still are the terms of the American Jewish attack upon Begin, which simply echo the Arab language of delegitimation. The critics do not merely contrast the political aims of Likud with those of the Labor party—which, as it happens, initiated the policy of West Bank settlements—but raise the specter of satanic evil. Thus, no less a Zionist than Arthur Hertzberg, writing in the pages of the *New York Review of Books*, concludes a piece on the threat posed by Menachem Begin with the incredible exhortation, "The Jews of the world can no longer choose to be silent." This puts Begin in the gallery of all those—may their names be blotted out—against whose murderous intentions Jews should have been expected to raise their voices in the past and should be raising their voices now.

Hertzberg uses the standard formula of inversion to transform the global reality of which Israel is a part into a hand-to-hand Jewish combat. American Jews "fear" Begin, he says, because he is destroying the glorious vision of Israel created by David Ben-Gurion. The American Jewish community "was persuaded to support Zionism after 1945 by the vision of a Jewish state that would *redeem* the victims of Hitler and build a *benign* society that could be a *light unto the nations*" (emphasis added). Now Begin, heir to a counter-tradition of Jewish zealotry that wants to bring Jews into the world of "real power," perverts the moral cause of the state. He is "frightening" and "dangerous," and the claims he is advancing to the land of Israel threaten to bring about a "confrontation between Jews and Gentiles."

Hertzberg, who (as we have seen) is a perceptive historian of the process of Jewish delegitimation since the Enlightenment, thus falls neatly into its trap. He pleads for the higher Israel as if Israel's moral behavior, and not its existence, were the source of the difficulty it faces in the Middle East, and as if it has taken Begin and the Likud to bring about the threat of "a confrontation between Jews and Gentiles."

It is far too convenient, as well as demonstrably deceptive, to pretend that Begin is the cause of the fears that are experienced by American Jews. They are frightened because of the tremendous rise of *Arab* "real power" and prestige since the establishment of the state of Israel; because of the unanticipated return of anti-Semitism in the mask of anti-Zionism; because of the hammering to which Israel is subjected, even by countries it has benefited at considerable cost of effort to itself. This frightens American Jews, as indeed it should, because it puts them into a position of responsibility for a vulnerable and unpopular brother.*

As for the West Bank, it is simple historical fact that the Arabs who fled Palestine in 1948-49 were

* In an article in COMMENTARY, "The Exposed American Jew," Nathan Glazer wrote of these fears with a keen grasp of their true source—and that was in June 1975, two years before Begin's election. See also my "The Anxious American Jew," COMMENTARY, September 1978.

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left by *their* brothers to rot in refugee camps, a superior breeding ground for terrorism. (At the same time, Jews fleeing from Arab countries, in equal numbers, were absorbed by Israel imperfectly but with genuine and often self-sacrificing initiative.) The use to which the Arab refugees of 1948 have been put by their respective host countries has created a terrible force in the Middle East, and it is no comfort to Israel or to the Jews that the Arab countries are themselves, to some extent, reaping the harvest of hatred. What frightens Jews is that decades of callous Arab neglect should now be laid to their conscience, and history rewritten at Arab will. It also begins to be frightening that a Jewish historian of Hertzberg's caliber lends his hand to the process.

Contrary to Hertzberg's claim, and that of Anthony Lewis as well, American Jews after 1945 were "persuaded to accept" no glorious dream of Israel as a light unto the nations, or even the promise of a Labor Zionist homeland. With the same guilt and relief that prompted America itself to consent to the birth of a Jewish state (one that would, among other things, absorb the burden of hundreds of thousands of broken refugees who might otherwise have applied *here*), American Jews accepted and then came to support Israel as an assurance of the normalization of Jewish existence —which meant that their own place would be more comfortable as a result.

Nor was that "acceptance" quite as wholehearted as Hertzberg pretends. The left-wing intellectuals, the assimilationists, some of the Bundists and Communists and their children, never altogether made peace with a national Jewish presence in the world, certainly not one to which they might be expected to owe moral or spiritual allegiance. They accepted Israel with the proviso that it remain true to their own prior political orientation, their secular outlook, and their preference for Western culture. Indeed, the more honest among them have expressed over the years the conditional nature of that acceptance, as if one gives birth to a country, as to a child, on condition that it vote socialist and stay out of the synagogue. Now that attacks on Israel are becoming *de rigueur* among the cosmopolitan intelligentsia, many old-time opponents of Jewish "chauvinism" are resurfacing to add their outcry to the general din.

Hertzberg would have been on more solid ground had he pointed out that most American Jews would not have voted for Begin and are not in favor of either his domestic or his foreign policies. But this in itself is hardly surprising. In the absence of a strong, autonomous Jewish press in America, there is relatively little day-to-day neutral information on Israel, and even the Jewish press has been anti-Begin from the start, that is, since the 1940's, and more and more so since his election in 1977. The putative "silence" of the Jews has been mostly found among those who support Begin, not those who oppose him.

If the views of Israelis and American Jews did coincide for several decades, it was because they were both so close to the same source, both largely products of a common East European experience of modernization, discrimination, and emigration. Yet the historical and geographic pressures on the two communities are so different that the cultural gap between them cannot help but widen with the years, and just as the attitudes of American Jews reflect what they think is good for them, so the attitudes of Israelis, freely expressed in frequent elections and public-opinion polls, declare what they think is good for *them*. Jews in both America and Israel may be equally afraid of the debilitating consequence of Arab rejectionism and the attempt at delegitimation; Israeli voters happen to think for the moment that the Likud coalition is a better instrument for dealing with the problem, even if American Jews, from their privileged distance, think otherwise. In any case, it ill becomes individuals who oppose Begin's religious rhetoric to employ, as Hertzberg does, the messianic language of redemption in making known their own political preferences.

Jews who advocate attacking the government of Israel rather than the Arab rejectionists ask us to believe in the anguish of their concern. Only Israel's great moral danger and suicidal folly, they say, prompt them to switch from defense to offense. Yet one may question the sincerity of these self-justifications, for morality is measured by the demands one places upon oneself, not on others. American Jews who want an Israel shaped in their image know that the Law of Return enables them to act upon their desire, and to vote in the next Israeli election. What critics call the "cosmopolitan minority" in Israel is shrinking because cosmopolitans who could form the majority do not immigrate to Israel with the same staying power or in the same numbers as do the Orthodox, the supporters of Gush Emunim, and Soviet émigré antisocialists. Yet it is fully within the power of American Jews, the most numerous Jewish community in the world, to reclaim the land for whatever social or political purpose they have the dedication to shape. The new American Jewish "'idealists" who fear so greatly for the future of the state might demand of themselves no less than they credit to the Zionists whom they cite as their heroes.

In the meantime, the withdrawal of support from Israel becomes ever more selfish and debased. Leonard Fein, editor of *Moment* magazine, has vowed (from the banks of the Charles) to topple the Begin government. In the most recent issue of his magazine, to the accompaniment of the usual expressions of pain and anguish, he suggests that American Jews *boycott* travel to Judea and Samaria—the West Bank—to show their opposition to Israeli policy in that area. It does not appear to have occurred to Fein that Jews attempting to influence Israeli policy in this manner are no different from President Hosni Mubarak who refuses to come to Israel's cap-

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ital city of Jerusalem—for does not he object to Israeli "occupation" with the same righteous vehemence as they? Belligerents boycott one another. American Jews, who until recently tried to prevent the penetration of the Arab boycott to these shores, are now invited instead to declare themselves a new category of belligerent, and to initiate a boycott of their own. Not only are Jews taking over from the Arabs their arguments, Fein wants to adopt their tactics as well.

THE Arab campaign to discredit Zionism caught the Jews before they had altogether regained their self-respect in the context of the modern age. There are many who do not know how to resist that campaign, others who lack the power and the will, still others who have moved preemptively to join the attack, renaming their fear as fear of their fellow Jews, and their anger as a righteous anger with their fellow Jews. Thus a rabbi recently announced to his congregation from the pulpit *as a fact* that the Israeli army had dressed an insane man in uniform and sent him armed into the Al Aksa mosque during prayer time to shoot innocent Arabs. No one rose to "silence" this rabbi, certainly not his numb congregation. The result of all this is to magnify internal conflict, and leave the campaign of delegitimation untouched at its source.

The Jews of Israel—doves and hawks, religious and secular alike—have learned that whether or not a people can be purer than others, "a light unto the nations," it must first be considered as good as others, unexceptional by the standards of the international community, normally designated on the map of enemies, neutrals, and friends. The state of Israel has shown itself capable of defending its borders, and also of readjusting them in exchange for political security. The American Jewish community, beneficiary of the process of Jewish normalization in the world, has been proud to assist it in a minor way. Now that Arab influence spreads to this continent, and concentrates the campaign of discreditation in the United States, American Jews are being asked to bear the brunt of resistance.

Indeed, they may now have come once again to a severe time of testing. As this article goes to press, Israeli forces have entered Lebanon to secure the northern sector of their country from continual harassment. In the past, such actions by Israel, though successful from a military point of view, have invariably unleashed waves of hypocritical diplomatic reproach, and the early responses at the UN and elsewhere this time show every sign of conforming to the usual pattern. It remains to be seen how the American Jewish community will stand up to a renewed and potentially even more virulent attack on the legitimacy of Israel.

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My Running Debate With Einstein

Sidney Hook

I don't write on physics: why do you write on politics?

Max Nomad to Albert Einstein

HAD Albert Einstein been an ordinary mortal or even an ordinary scientist, his views on life, politics, and human destiny would have had no great significance. Nor would they have received much attention or have influenced his fellow men. But as the foremost scientific thinker of our time, the only one whose name could be coupled with Isaac Newton, Einstein was naturally solicited for his views on all sorts of questions not related to the central discipline of his life. The authority of his judgment on public affairs in the minds of the public was enhanced after the explosion of the atomic bomb over Hiroshima, since the manufacture of the bomb was the practical consequence of one of his scientific discoveries.

Although it could be argued that the explosion of the bomb over Hiroshima (but not over Nagasaki) brought the Japanese war to an abrupt close, and probably saved the lives of millions on both sides that would have been lost had American troops attempted to storm the beaches of Japan, the use of atomic weapons generated a fear of a world holocaust that has intensified over the years. In some quarters it has generated a distrust of science and scientists—despite the fact that the decision to manufacture and use atomic and then thermonuclear weapons was a political and not a scientific one.

The public fear and distrust of atomic weapons were never directed against Einstein, who on occasion had second thoughts about the wisdom of the policy that led to their emergence. His well-known pacifism and his pronouncements on curbing the use of these weapons gave him an immunity from the criticism and suspicion often visited on scientists dedicated to the defense of the nation. They in no way affected his authority or the eagerness with which the public attended to his periodic statements on matters of public policy.

It is too much to expect the public to have been aware of the divagations of judgment of the world's great scientists (or, for that matter, its great artists and musicians) whenever they have wandered into fields unrelated to those in which they achieved greatness. Educated laymen seem to be aware that there is no automatic transference of learning from one field to another, but in social and particularly political affairs there is a tendency, especially in modern times, to give undue weight to the political judgments of great figures in art, literature, and science. Moreover, although the natural skepticism of common sense soon discounts the political declarations of a Picasso, a T. S. Eliot, or a Jean-Paul Sartre, it does not extend so readily to the political judgments of scientists, primarily because their vocation seems to express the quintessential practice of rationality.

And yet reflection shows that carrying over *some* of the attitudes and values of scientific inquiry to the consideration of political affairs may result in disaster. Aristotle recognized long ago that it was foolish to apply the standards of exactitude and rigor from one field of investigation to another whose subject matter was quite different. A historian who thinks like a geometrician can make no sense of human behavior. A scientist who tries to live up to the same policy of openness and trust he follows in his dealings with his colleagues would make a very poor diplomat.

The situation is complicated by the fact that in politics many more variables are involved than in any scientific discipline, and that the intention of the political agent cannot be regarded as a reliable datum. The logic of scientific method makes the scientist a skeptic of *results* until they are independently confirmed, but he tends to take for granted the truthfulness of the reports he receives. Dealing in political affairs and unschooled in the history of human conflict, he is always at a loss and disadvantage in assessing proposals and overtures by individuals whose principles of behavior stem from a world view or an ideological commitment profoundly different from his own. This is particularly true when a scientist nurtured

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in a democratic culture discusses foreign-policy issues with someone who is committed to the dogmas of a totalitarian society.

The bearing of these remarks will be more apparent as I discuss my correspondence over the years (and conversations on two important occasions) with Albert Einstein.

MY FIRST exchange with Einstein on a political issue took place in February 1937 when, together with others, I sought to organize an International Commission to Investigate the Truth about the Moscow Trials. (I had had one previous exchange with him in 1935, when I sought, and he graciously provided, a recommendation backing the appointment of Hans Reichenbach as a professor of philosophy at New York University. This fell through because the Turkish government refused to release Reichenbach from his contract to teach at the University of Istanbul.)

The first large public trial of alleged conspirators in the Soviet Union had been held in 1936. Although not in the dock, Leon Trotsky was accused not only of organizing attempts to assassinate Stalin and destroy the Soviet economy but of collaborating with Hitler, the Japanese militarists, and the British secret service to overthrow the Soviet regime he and Lenin had forged in the October Revolution of 1917. At the time, Trotsky was being harassed in Norway from where he was soon to be deported. A committee had been set up to defend Trotsky's right to political asylum and a public hearing, and it was under these auspices that a commission was launched.

John Dewey had been persuaded to accept membership on both the committee and the commission. I set about to enlist the support, or expression of sympathy, of leading figures in the cultural world for the effort to give Leon Trotsky a hearing where he could state his case against the shocking accusations being hurled against him—accusations supported by no material evidence but only by the confessions of the Moscow defendants. Bertrand Russell, Morris R. Cohen, Horace Kallen, Arthur O. Lovejoy, and others endorsed our project. George Santayana refused, and was stirred to wrath by my invitation to him to leave the Olympian heights from which he surveyed all time and eternity. (He may have felt that an intervention on behalf of Trotsky ill comported with his expressed admiration for Mussolini, Franco, and Stalin.)

On February 22 I sent the following letter to Einstein:

Dear Professor Einstein:

I am enclosing a document of great international importance drawn up by Professors John Dewey (Columbia) and Horace M. Kallen (New School for Social Research) and signed by a number of eminent American liberals. It concerns not only the right of political asylum but perhaps the most fundamental of all human rights, viz., the right to answer in an open hearing grave charges against honor and life before being adjudged innocent or guilty. There is no one in the world whose moral authority is greater than yours on the issues involved. At the suggestion, therefore, of several members of our committee, I am writing you for an expression of opinion on the Dewey-Kallen statement. In addition to the names of those listed, endorsements of the statements expressed in the statement have been received from Professor Morris R. Cohen and from Dr. Alvin Johnson, director of the New School for Social Research, and founder of the University of Exile.

I shall be glad to send additional information upon request.

Einstein's reply was prompt. On February 23, 1937 he wrote (the following is an English translation of the German):

Dear Professor Hook:

According to my view there is no doubt that every accused person should be given an opportunity to establish his innocence. This certainly holds true for Trotsky.

The only question that can be raised is *how* this should be done. That question is pertinent because Trotsky is an active and skilled political personality who is sure to seek an opportunity for the effective propagation of his political goals in public. I believe that a *public* procedure would serve Trotsky's purposes to the highest degree. There is on the other hand the question whether such a public procedure, conducted in this country, would really further the ends of justice. For it is questionable whether sufficiently competent judges can be found in view of the great difficulty of assembling authentic material evidence. I fear that the only consequence will be the achievement of an effective propaganda for Trotsky's cause, without the possibility of reaching a well-founded verdict.

That is why the public character of the proposed undertaking seems to me to be mistaken. If a number of intelligent jurists were to investigate the case privately, and if, after they were successful in reaching a truly convincing conclusion, went public with it, I would welcome such an approach with much enthusiasm. For it would serve the ends of justice and at the same time avoid side effects whose harm under the circumstances could far outweigh the value of any positive results.

To this letter I replied on March 10, 1937 (and give here the English translation of my German text):

Dear Professor Einstein:

To begin with, permit me to express my gratitude to you for taking the time to write me about the subject of my recent communication. We are all heartened by your expression of interest in the establishment of an impartial commission of inquiry to investigate the charges against Trotsky.

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The question as to whether the hearings of the commission should be public has been discussed at great length by our committee and the tentative conclusions reached were as follows:

In the event that either one of the parties invited to appear before the commission refuses to put in an appearance, secret sessions at which only one party is present would have no validity and be suspect in the eyes of the world. Further, the announcement that such sessions would be secret would provoke a storm of criticism, which would turn public opinion away from interest in the commission.

The danger that Trotsky might use the open hearings for his own political purposes was, also, considered at length. The upshot of the discussion seemed to show that there were few people who believed that Trotsky, who now has every opportunity in the press to make propaganda for his political purposes, would seize this particular opportunity to do so. He would have nothing to gain by such procedure, for first, it would be irrelevant, and ruled out by the commissioners, and, second, its effect would be prejudicial to his own demand for justice on the specific charges made against him.

It is, also, clear that the commissioners would take testimony bearing only upon the specific charges made (of where, when, and how), so that in a properly conducted inquiry, even if Trotsky were foolish enough to attempt to make political propaganda, this could easily be checked.

Balancing the definite disadvantages which would follow the announcement that the hearings of the commission would be secret, against the possible dangers that open hearings might be used for political purposes, the overwhelming sentiment of our committee was in favor of the latter alternative.

Of course, once the commission were established, it could adopt rules and regulations to guide its own procedure with a particular eye upon the dangers of a public hearing.

We would be very grateful to you if you would give these considerations some further thought and would make whatever suggestions or comments you believe might be helpful in the situation.

A few days later, receiving no word from Einstein, I telephoned his residence and spoke to someone who, I assume, was Helen Dukas, Einstein's secretary, and asked whether I could visit him briefly at his convenience with a friend. Time was growing short. The panel of commissioners was incomplete and although we had no real expectation that Einstein would serve, we hoped to get at least an endorsement of the project on the basis of which we would try to enroll other commissioners. An appointment was set up and together with Benjamin Stolberg, the well-known labor journalist, who spoke German, I journeyed to Princeton. Unfortunately, I kept no notes of our conversation, but as I have related the story many times the main points of our interview have remained fixed in my memory.

EINSTEIN received us cordially in his study, smoked his pipe, and spoke to us in English which, although heavily accented, was surprisingly good. I restated our case and invitation and placed particular stress on the fact that John Dewey, America's leading liberal philosopher, had agreed to serve on the commission. Einstein heard me out without interruption. When I concluded, he began by expressing his high respect for John Dewey but then went on to point out that the commission was not likely to succeed because it gave the impression of one-sidedness. I assured him that the commission would surely invite the Soviet government to send any witnesses and representatives and even someone to question or cross-examine Trotsky. He was dubious about this and said that since the commission had no legal power to summon witnesses its judgment could not help appearing arbitrary.

Stolberg intervened to say that the commission would not necessarily reach any conclusion; that depended on what the hearings, scheduled in Mexico City, New York, and Paris before its subcommittees, would reveal. But regardless of whether or not sufficient evidence was uncovered to pronounce a well-grounded judgment, the commission would accomplish one thing that had not been done. It would give Trotsky his day in court—an opportunity to answer the charges made against him at the Moscow Trials and in the world press, and to reply to any questions put to him by the commissioners or by any representative of the Soviet government, even if it were Vishinsky, the Moscow prosecutor himself. Einstein remained unconvinced, repeated his doubts, and then went on at some length to say that he was aware of what Communists were capable of doing, making specific mention of their mischievous role in Germany. At the very end he made the startling statement, "From my point of view both Stalin and Trotsky are political gangsters."

Stolberg, on hearing this, threw up his hands. I, too, was taken aback and for a moment was at a loss for words. Then falteringly I replied: "That may be, but in a civilized community it is important to see that even gangsters receive justice."

To which Einstein rejoined with a warm smile: "You are perfectly right. But I am no policeman." I knew then that we had come in vain. I changed the subject and we talked, with Stolberg silently glowering, about the philosophy of science. When I got up to go, Einstein gave me an inscribed copy of his lecture before the Franklin Institute. He insisted on walking us to the railroad station from his house. It was a mild day and he was attired in a threadbare sweater and wore sneakers without socks. Our conversation was about conditions in Germany. Einstein spoke very resentfully about the municipality of Berlin which had cancelled the gift of a house to him, and scornfully about the alleged weapons—a kitchen bread-knife—that had been found in the house. He made a number

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of other remarks about Hitler's persecutions but I recall definitely only one: "If and when war comes Hitler will realize the harm he has done Germany by driving out the Jewish scientists."

Although I was keenly disappointed by Einstein's refusal to join or endorse the commission of inquiry into the truth of the Moscow Trials, in contradistinction to Stolberg and others I could appreciate his reasons. It was evident to me that he did not take the Moscow Trials at their face value, and that if he had little enthusiasm for Trotsky he had still less for Stalin. I came across no references to the Moscow Trials in anything he published; he died a year before Khrushchev's famous talk about the crimes of Stalin before the 20th Congress of the Russian Communist party in 1956. Although not mentioning the principals of the Moscow Trials, Khrushchev's revelations of the monstrous deeds of Stalin shook the beliefs of even the staunchest Stalinists in the validity of the trials.

Years later, to my profound shock, that remarkable historian of ideas, Lewis Feuer, called my attention to a letter written late in 1938 by Einstein to Max Born and published in the volume of Born's correspondence with Einstein long after the latter's death. Here Einstein confided to Born that he had changed his mind about the trials and had been persuaded by those "who know Russia best" that they were authentic and not staged! Had I known of the existence of this letter and Einstein's sentiments at any time while he was alive, I probably would never have written him about anything else except the evidence in those trials and the counterevidence compiled in the final report of the commission, *Not Guilty*.

In an effort to find out who had dissuaded Einstein of his initial judgment that the trials were faked, I wrote last year to Dr. Otto Nathan, who until recently was a trustee of the Einstein estate. He had been known while teaching at the School of Commerce at NYU to be a fanatical anti-anti-Communist, and I was under the impression that he had taken the Moscow Trials as genuine. I wondered whether he had been instrumental in changing Einstein's mind. I therefore sent a letter to him on August 10, 1981 asking whether Einstein had been referring to him in speaking of "those who know Russia best." Since I received no response from Dr. Nathan we shall have to suspend judgment on this point.

DESPITE the failure of my efforts to enlist Einstein's support for the commission, our relations remained friendly. I addressed the following letter to him on June 15, 1940:

Dear Professor Einstein:

May I turn to you with a simple question concerning a remark the late Edward Bernstein reports as having been made to him by you? The answer will help me in some scientific work I am doing. I am at work on an extended critique of "dialectical materialism," the state philosophy of Soviet Russia, which seems to me every whit as false and pernicious as current "philosophical" doctrines in Germany. One of the sources of this philosophy is Engels's posthumous book on *Dialektik und Natur*. When I was in Berlin in 1928 Edward Bernstein told me that he had asked you to read the manuscript and that you had declared that although it might have some interest as an item in Engels's personal biography, in your opinion it is of no importance either for contemporary physics or for the history of physics. I am in complete accord with this judgment.

However, in an effort to rehabilitate the "authority" of this manuscript, Stalinists are claiming, both here and abroad, that the only part of the manuscript which Bernstein showed you was the section on electricity and not the sections on Dialectic, Forms of Motion, Heat, etc. which they claim are very profound indeed and which you presumably did not see. I had gathered from Bernstein that you had seen all there was to see but Riazanov, formerly head of the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow (now liquidated), told me in 1929 that you had not. In a review of the manuscript in the *Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 1, No. 1, another Stalinist, D. Struik, actually claims that you regard the manuscript as important for science. Latterly, J. B. S. Haldane, an English Stalinist, has been claiming that you only saw the essay on electricity.

My question briefly is whether you saw the other sections of the manuscript, as Bernstein claimed, and whether your original judgment was intended to apply to the whole of it. I shall, of course, be grateful for anything else you may care to say about the subject.

I received the following response from Einstein, which I have translated from the German:

Dear Professor Hook:

Edward Bernstein put the whole manuscript at my disposal and my expression of opinion related to the whole manuscript. I am firmly convinced that Engels himself would find it laughable if he could see how great an importance is being attached after such a length of time to his modest attempt.

My next communication was addressed to Einstein a few years later on a matter unrelated to politics, having to do with a debate then raging on the teaching of science in colleges and universities. Einstein responded briefly and cordially, and I was subsequently granted permission to publish his letter in a book I was completing, *Education for Modern Man*.

THE second and last time I met Einstein was on the occasion of the Princeton University Bicentennial. I had been invited to participate in a three-day conference, to be held February 19-21, 1947, on "The University and Its

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World Responsibilities." The conference was well attended. A number of social events were provided for the participants in the intervals between sessions.* Among the events was a visit to the Institute for Advanced Study, which I joined out of curiosity. No one had seen Einstein at the sessions of the conference despite the fact that at the time he was urging the formation of a world government. Very few people were in their offices at the Institute as we were guided through the building. But suddenly Einstein made a shy appearance and was casually introduced to our party, most of whom seemed just as shy about interrupting the labors of the great man. As the party went on I drew back, entered Einstein's office through the half-open door, and introduced myself. He recognized me at once, waved me to a chair, and we chatted for almost a half hour.

We talked about two things, Germany and Russia. The drift of the conversation has remained with me and I vividly remember some of the expressions Einstein used. We spoke in English, but sometimes Einstein would say something in German when the English words failed him. I made no mention of the Moscow Trials or of the Dewey Commission, whose report had long since been published, or of my visit to him a decade previously (if I had been aware then of his letter to Max Born, my conversation would have centered on that).

I began by expressing my surprise and curiosity concerning his view of the collective guilt of the German people for the crimes of Hitler. I pointed to the fact that hundreds of thousands of Germans had been jailed or sent to concentration camps. He replied that of course he did not mean to include Hitler's victims but the entire adult population that had supported Hitler to the very end. When I said that guilt was an individual thing, he countered that the Germans had acted as individuals in what they failed to do as well as in what they did. And then he went on to make some general comments about Germans and Americans. The Germans were an arrogant people (*Die Deutsche sind ein hochnässige Volk*) and the Americans were naive and sentimental in their postwar judgments and reactions. The Russians knew the Germans better. When I said something about the behavior of the Red Army in the working-class district of Wedding in Berlin, he remarked that the Americans always seemed eager to believe the worst about the Russians.

I then changed the subject to the Soviet Union and pointed out that it was a threat not only to Eastern Europe but Western Europe as well. (This was after Churchill had delivered his famous "Iron Curtain" speech at Fulton, Mo.) I said that he, Einstein, seemed to me to be taking a Christian Science attitude toward the Soviet Union, explaining the Christian Science view of the nature of evil. He seemed amused at the expression "Christian Science" but denied that the Russians constituted a threat to the West. "It is foolish [*lächerlich*, laughable] to be afraid of this *halbwilde Menge* [half-savage horde]." He brushed aside my retort that they knew how to use weapons and that in the past Europe had been ravaged by other "half-savage hordes." (This phrase stuck in my mind; in subsequent correspondence Einstein denied he had used it in any invidious sense with respect to the Russians alone.) There were many things the Soviets did of which he did not approve but the Soviet Union was less of a threat to peace than some Americans who spoke of preventive war. I pointed out that this was certainly *not* the postion of the American government, and that in a free society all sorts of irresponsible opinions were expressed.

Despite our spirited differences our conversation seemed friendly enough. But I felt that I had taken too much of Einstein's time. I arose apologetically and thanked him for having taken the time to talk with me. He shrugged and there was a gleam of amusement in his eye when I bade him goodbye.

A LITTLE more than a year later, having read that Einstein had endorsed the program and candidacy of Henry Wallace for the Presidency of the United States, I wrote him the following letter:

Dear Dr. Einstein:

According to the New York *Times* of March 30, 1948 the National Wallace for President Committee claims that you have endorsed Wallace as a man who is "clear, honest, and unassuming," and that you have declared yourself in agreement with the fundamental premises of his program for peace.

Because of the gravity of the issues involved, I am taking the liberty of writing to inquire whether this report is accurate. If it is, I think it is nothing short of disastrous for the cause of genuine peace and cultural freedom with which your name has been until now indissolubly associated.

Proof in social affairs is notoriously difficult. But if anything is demonstrable it is that in his public utterances Mr. Wallace has not been intellectually honest or clear or unassuming. I need only cite here his distortion of the Baruch-Lilienthal proposals, his willful refusal to repudiate an acknowledged error, his charge that the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia was a defensive action against the interference of the American Ambassador, his deletion of all criticism of

* It was at the evening banquet of the Bicentennial that Harold J. Laski brought down the house with a detailed and eloquent account of his private midnight interview with Stalin in which, after dismissing the interpreter, Stalin took him under the arm and walked him to his car, and said, "Mr. Laski, please take a message from me to the people of England. Tell the people of England that I want peace." The incident, as Laski's biographer attests, was made up of whole cloth. Laski understood no Russian and Stalin could not speak a word of English!

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Soviet expansionism from his speeches, his refusal to protest against the vast network of concentration camps in the Soviet Union and its satellites, his declaration that the U.S. suffers from an excess of political or Bill of Rights democracy and that the Soviet Union enjoys "economic democracy" but not political democracy, as if you could have the first without the second.

All this would be comparatively unimportant if it bore only upon Mr. Wallace's personal qualities. The issue is not personal but fundamentally political—and this is what makes the implied claim of the Wallace for President Committee that you are endorsing its candidate so momentous.

Politically, Wallace today is a captive of the Communist party whose devious work in other countries you are familiar with much better than most scientists. His speeches are written for him by fellow-travelers. His line is indistinguishable from that of *Pravda* and the *Daily Worker*. It expresses from the first to last the illogic of appeasement.*

One does not have to be an unqualified supporter of American foreign policy or even of American culture—and as a democrat, a Socialist, and a Jew I, for one, am not—to recognize that, so long as the self-corrective procedures of the democratic process are left intact, the incomplete patterns of freedom in the Western world are infinitely preferable to the brutal totalitarianism of Soviet Communism.

If this premise is granted then it remains only to establish the fact of whether or not the Soviet Union is committed to a policy of expansionism or ultimate world-conquest, to derive the general line of policy for peace-loving democrats.

Three lines of evidence point to the fact that the Stalin regime is committed to a program of world expansion: (a) what it says, (b) what it does, and (c) how it is organized for action abroad.

(a) The state doctrine of the USSR makes it clear that its regime does not believe that it can be secure until all other forms of government—whether democratic or not—are destroyed. I shall be happy to cite chapter and verse on request.

(b) What the regime of the USSR has done is illustrated in its long list of treaty violations which surpasses in length that of Hitler; its forcible annexation of territory and peoples which never belonged to it; its use of the veto; its refusal to support any feasible plan of international control of nuclear energy; its systematic defamation of all individuals who espouse a program of world government as agents of British-American imperialism.

(c) The intensive use of Fifth Columns to overthrow democracies has been part and parcel of the Kremlin's policy from the very beginning until the present. You know how it operated in the Weimar Republic. You can see today how it is girding itself for action in Italy and France.

Wallace is the Gottwald of tomorrow. His policy is designed to put the U.S. and its allies in a position where before long the only alternative to internal chaos and the threat of external annihilation would be capitulation to Stalin—the road which Beneš took.

When we spoke last at Princeton on the occasion of the reception given by the Institute for one of the Bicentennial Conferences you professed skepticism that the Russians—"a half-savage horde," as you called them—could ever constitute a menace to the U.S. I can only repeat now what I said then. This "half-savage horde" by itself is not hostile to us but only their regime which unfortunately controls them. This regime with the help of its Fifth Column can take all of Europe and Asia which they will undoubtedly do if Wallace's policy prevails. An organized Europe and Asia can within a decade amass such power that we in the West can have no chance for survival as a free people.

This letter is already overlong. I know how busy you are and how remote the chances are that I can come to talk to you—which I would dearly love to do—and bring you my evidence for the statements I have made. I do not believe my mind is closed to counterevidence and argument and I do not advocate as Bertrand Russell does a preventive war. But the prima-facie case against Wallace's policy is so strong, that I hope you will reconsider your endorsement of it.

IN REPLY to the foregoing Einstein wrote to me in English on April 3, 1948. I abbreviate the contents of his letter:

Dear Professor Hook:

I must openly confess that I was very astonished by your letter. What I have really done was to recommend warmly Wallace's book—in one sentence—paid tribute to Wallace as a man who is above all the petty interests. I have furthermore never spoken of the Russians as a "half-savage horde," for this is not my way of expression. I believe one could say this with some justification of every nation on earth; but I don't like the expression.

In my opinion your views are far from objective. If you ask yourself who, since the termination of the war, has threatened his opponent to a higher degree by direct action—the Russians, the Americans, or the Americans, the Russians? The answer is, in my opinion, not doubtful and is accurately given in Wallace's book. It is, furthermore, not doubtful that the military strength of the USA is at present much greater than that of Soviet Russia. It would therefore be sheer madness if the Russians would seek war. On the other side I have heard influential people in this country pleading for "preventive war" even before the last war was finished.

I am not blind to the serious weaknesses of the Russian system of government and I would not like to live under such government. But it has, on the other side, great merits and it is difficult to decide whether it would have been possible for the Russians to survive by following softer methods. If you should be interested in

* Wallace himself was somewhat discomfited by the use the Communist party sought to make of him and subsequently denounced the Communists for their chicanery.

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my opinion you may read my answer to a few Russian scientists which I am enclosing.

An oral discussion seems to me not promising because I see from your letter the rigidity and one-sidedness of your judgment.

BEFORE replying to Einstein's letter of April 3, I read very carefully the report he had sent, which consisted of an "Open Letter from Four Soviet Scientists" and Einstein's reply, both of which had appeared in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* in February 1948. I was puzzled, for the exchange had very little relevance to the points at issue between us. The Soviet scientists had published a very sharp criticism of Einstein's proposal for a world government and the abolition of the absolute validity of national sovereignty. They saw in this proposal for a world state the cunning effort of American imperialism to achieve world hegemony, and they charged Einstein with being an unwitting catspaw of American imperial interests. In his reply Einstein had no difficulty in refuting these fantasies, delivered himself of a number of miscellaneous observations on the United States and its economic system, most of them hostile, gently chided the Soviet Union for its failure to accept the American proposal to internationalize atomic energy, and conclusively established that his advocacy of world government was only motivated by the belief that the concept and practice of unlimited national sovereignty in the age of atomic energy could result in the catastrophe of war—an evil of such magnitude that it dwarfed all differences over political and economic matters.

One could agree with every word of Einstein's response to the Soviet scientists—I did not—and wonder what relevance it had to the points I had made. Incidentally, there was a lacuna in Einstein's argument that a world government would insure mankind against war: it overlooked the possibility of civil war! The fiercest war in the history of mankind until the 20th century had been the American Civil War of 1861-65. But this was also completely irrelevant to the support that Einstein gave Henry Wallace's program and candidacy.

Naturally, I replied immediately to Einstein's letter of April 3:

Dear Dr. Einstein:

What prompted me to write you was the use the National Wallace for President Committee was making of your praise of Wallace and his position, and my honest doubt as to the accuracy of the report. I regret it very much if you found my letter annoying in any way. We are all groping for the truth on matters of great moment and in the past I have set some store on your political insight.

Naturally, I am grieved that you should consider my judgment, for which I indicated the lines of evidence, so "rigid and one-sided" as to make oral discussion unfruitful. And knowing how limited your time is, I certainly cannot expect you to engage in lengthy correspondence. But I do hope you will not take offense if I tell you, as one American citizen to another, why I do not find your remarks convincing even though I have pondered over them for a long time. There are probably many others who think as I do, and since you believe us mistaken it may perhaps be of some interest to you to see what our assumptions and arguments are. If we are wrong, you will find it easier to convince us than the Soviet scientists.

The question is: which foreign policy on the part of the U.S. to the USSR is most likely to preserve peace? and not the question of the internal regime of the USSR. The answer to the first question depends on how we assess the evidence which bears on the intentions of the Soviet regime. When you warned the world against the spread of Hitlerism, on what evidence did you rely? On what Hitler *said*—not to [George] Lansbury*—but to the Nazi party, and on what Hitler *did*. I have pointed to the evidence which shows what Stalin believes—the regnant dogmas of the Communist party—and the record of his actions. Together they reveal a program of world conquest.

You do not challenge this evidence. You do not present contrary evidence. Instead you ask: "Who has threatened his opponent to a higher degree by direct action—the Russians, the Americans, or the Americans, the Russians?" This is a fair question. Reviewing in my mind the events that followed the end of the war, and considering America not as isolationist but as part of the world community, I should say that the Soviet Union by her violation of the principles of the Atlantic Charter, by her violation of her agreements to permit free elections and a free press in Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, etc., by the coup she inspired in Czechoslovakia, by her war of nerves against Finland, and now Norway and Sweden, by her behavior in Berlin, by her sabotage of the UN commissions on Greece, the Balkans, and Korea, and almost all of its agencies—that by all this, the Soviet Union has been the aggressor.

What actions of the U.S. do you consider as direct aggressions of equal weight against the Soviet Union? Do you mean the Marshall Plan in which the Soviet Union was invited to participate?

In 1940 American isolationists used to ask us whether America under Roosevelt had not been guilty of more hostile acts against Hitler's Germany than vice versa. You will recall how we answered that. It seems to me that the actions of the Soviet regime warrant even more strongly the inference that it is actively hostile to the existence of American democratic institutions.

You point out that the military strength of

* The British Labor party pacifist leader who resigned in 1935 on the issue of League of Nations sanctions against Italy. In 1937 he visited Hitler and Mussolini in an effort to avert war.

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the U.S. is much greater than that of the USSR. Since this has been denied by many "experts," I should like to know on what evidence this judgment is based. But granted its truth, I am a little puzzled as to what follows from it in the way of foreign policy. Should we weaken our military strength or increase it? Are not the official Baruch-Lilienthal proposals significant in this connection as an indication of our willingness to submit to an international authority? Those few Americans who talk about a preventive war against the USSR speak as individuals. What they say can be matched by equally inflammatory statements in the *official* Soviet press. It seems to me that American policy should be judged by our *official* words and actions and not by the words of private citizens. That policy proclaims the belief that we are more likely to have peace if the democracies remain strong than if they disarm or appease.

The internal character of the Soviet regime is not relevant to our discussion. There exists no Jeffersonian International to overthrow the Soviet Union comparable to the Comintern. But I must confess to a bewilderment at the qualified nature of your judgment about the Soviet Union. In estimating its nature the point is not whether you, the greatest scientist in the world, would or would not like to live in the Soviet Union. You probably would be treated no worse than Pavlov if you remained silent about world government and similar matters. The point is how the average individual fares in the Soviet Union in respect to security of life, personal and political freedom. Have you any doubts on that score?

Nor do I understand your meaning when you write: "It is difficult to decide whether it would have been possible for the Russians to survive by following softer methods." Precisely what methods have you in mind? I am puzzled on what evidence anyone can assert that cultural purges and terror in astronomy, biology, art, music, literature, the social sciences, helped the Russians to survive, or how the millions of victims in concentration camps of the Soviet Union, not to speak of the wholesale executions, contributed in any way to the Russian victory over Hitler. The Russians defeated Napoleon who was relative to his time even mightier than Hitler. But I don't believe you would find it difficult to decide that this in no way constituted a historical justification of serfdom.

THERE was no reply from Einstein to the foregoing letter. I had occasion to write to him again when it was revealed that he was a sponsor of the Waldorf Astoria "peace congress" of March 1949 in which the foreign policy of the United States was roundly condemned and the Soviet Union hailed as the champion of world peace. There were many other sponsors, including Dr. Otto Nathan. The following letter, dated March 4, 1949, is identical with one I sent to Thomas Mann and other innocent and not-so-innocent sponsors of the Waldorf affair:

Dear Dr. Einstein:

I have been refused permission to present a paper by the Program Committee of the Cultural and Scientific Congress for World Peace. In this paper I wished to defend three theses which seemed to me of the greatest importance today:

1. There are no "national truths" in science, and that it is only by its deficiencies that a science can ever become the science of one nation or another.
2. There are no "class truths" or "party truths" in science. The belief that there is confuses the objective evidence for a theory which if warranted is universally valid with the *uses*, good, bad, or indifferent, that are made of it.
3. The cause of international scientific cooperation and peace has been very seriously undermined by the influence of doctrines which uphold the notion that there are "national" or "class" or "party" truths in science.

Not only have I been refused permission to present a paper at any of the sessions, but I have also been refused permission to lead the discussion at the plenary session. I requested at least fifteen minutes.

Since your name is listed as a sponsor of this congress, I am appealing to you to support my request that I be permitted to read a paper, preferably at the plenary session. No arrangements have been made, apparently, by the program committee to have the point of view which I represent presented to the congress. Further, no person who has in recent years ever spoken a critical word against all varieties of totalitarianism, including Stalin's, has been invited to the congress. Neither John Dewey nor Ernest Nagel nor Professor Muller nor Horace Kallen nor James T. Farrell nor Dos Passos nor Edmund Wilson nor hundreds of others have been invited to this congress for world peace.

This morning's newspaper reports the resignation of Professor Irwin Edman from the sponsoring committee of the congress on grounds that it is designed to promote "the Communist point of view or one closely approximating to it." I sincerely hope that this is not true. But the way this congress has been organized and my experience with it suggests that it is on the order of Wroclaw-Breslau.*

I never really expected Einstein to resign from the sponsoring committee of the Waldorf "peace congress" since I knew that some of the tactics of some groups opposed to the meeting, as well as difficulties the American government was making in granting visas to delegates from some countries, would meet with his disapproval, as it met with the disapproval of the group I helped organize to hold a counter-demonstration at Freedom House. But I wanted to leave no doubt in his mind con-

* A Communist meeting preceding the Waldorf congress at which plans were drawn up for a series of subsequent "peace meetings."

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cerning the questionable bona fides of the Waldorf organizers. I consequently sent some documentary material to him through his secretary.

My correspondence continued with Einstein. Although I suspected he was annoyed with me and was probably being regaled with tales about my "reactionary" views by Dr. Nathan, who, for reasons no one has been able to fathom, became one of Einstein's advisers, I knew that Einstein would respond to an honest query concerning the coherence and consistency of his views. I had been asked to review his book, *Out of My Later Years*, for the *Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, and found passages in the book which did not jibe with one another. And so on May 15, 1950 I wrote Einstein as follows:

Dear Professor Einstein:

I have been asked to review your recently published *Out of My Later Years* by the *Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science—and I am in a quandary. Some of the passages in the book seem to be at variance with each other even when allowance is made for differences in the context and date of the different papers. Since these passages are of some importance in assaying your present views on social and political issues, and since I dread running the risk of misunderstanding you on matters of such high concern, I am wondering whether you would be good enough to clarify the apparent inconsistency.

On page 181, you write:

> The humanitarian ideal of Europe appears indeed to be unalterably bound up with the free expression of opinion, to some extent with the free will of the individual, with the effort toward objectivity in thought without consideration of mere utility, and with the encouragement of differences in the realm of mind and taste. . . . I only know that I affirm them with my whole soul, and would find it intolerable to belong to a society which consistently denied them.

On page 187, however, you write:

> One must bear in mind that the people of Russia did not have a long political education, and changes to improve Russian conditions had to be carried through by a minority for the reason that there was no majority capable of doing it. If I had been born a Russian, I believe I could have adjusted myself to this situation.

The passage on page 187 was written later than the one on page 181; although on one interpretation they are not formally contradictory, their spirit clearly is. Would you please tell me how both views can be reconciled? In view of the regime of cultural and political terror in the USSR, whose intensity has increased over the years, one would imagine that no free mind loving freedom could adjust to this situation.

This seems to be a reasonable inference from your remark on page 149 that

> Without such [intellectual] freedom there would have been no Shakespeare, no Goethe, no Newton, no Faraday, no Pasteur, and no Lister.

Taken in conjunction with the fact that followers of Mendel and Morgan have been fiercely persecuted, that physicists who have accepted your views on space and time have been liquidated for smuggling "counterrevolutionary Trotskyism into astronomy," and that even the translation of your recent book (with Infeld) on *The Evolution of Physics* has been denounced as "a serious mistake" (*Sovietskaya kniga*, August 1949, pp. 35-40)—you know how "serious mistakes" are punished there—it is a little hard to understand the warrant for your statement.

A similar ambiguity of position *seems* to affect your discussion of other themes which involve the Soviet Union. For example, in discussing the powers of the world government on page 186, you say that it should have the power

> to interfere in countries where a minority is oppressing a majority, and so is creating the kind of instability that leads to war. Conditions such as exist in Argentina and Spain should be dealt with. There must be an end to the concept of non-intervention, for to end it is part of keeping the peace.

Excellent! But why no mention of countries in the Soviet orbit in which minorities are oppressing the majority in much worse fashion than in Argentina, e.g., Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Baltic countries, Hungary, etc.?

I realize how many and urgent are the pressures on your time and energy. But since the ambiguities which trouble me probably trouble many other students of social and political affairs, I am confident that their resolution will contribute to a more accurate understanding of your position and make discussion more fruitful.

My surmise was justified. In a matter of days I received a reply from him in English. His letter is in many ways extraordinary and in some respects startling:

Dear Professor Hook:

Thank you for your letter of May 15th. The two statements you mentioned do not contradict each other. In the first (page 181) I profess to intellectual and moral individualism. In the second statement (page 187) I try to seek understanding for the necessity of the Russian revolution and recognize (resp. voice the opinion) that under the circumstances prevailing in Russia at that time this revolution could only have been undertaken successfully by a resolute minority. It was natural, under the conditions, for a Russian who had the welfare of the people at heart to cooperate with and submit to this minority because the immediate goals could not have been achieved otherwise. It cannot be doubted that for an independent individual this meant a painful *temporary* renunciation of his personal independence. But I believe that I myself would have deemed it my duty to make this temporary sacrifice (as the lesser evil).

However, with this I do not mean to say that I do approve of the direct or indirect interfer-

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ence by the Soviet government in intellectual and artistic matters. Such interference seems to me objectionable, harmful, and even ridiculous. As far as the centralization of political power and the limitations of the freedom of action for the individual are concerned, I am of the opinion that these restrictions should not exceed the limit demanded by exterior security, inner stability, and the necessities resulting from a planned economy. An outsider is hardly able to judge the facts and possibilities. In any case it cannot be doubted that the achievements of the Soviet regime are considerable in the fields of education, public health, social welfare, and economics, and that the people as a whole have greatly gained by these achievements.

A proper reply to this letter would have required an extended comment on every sentence but I knew that this was not feasible and that there were limits to Einstein's patience. And so on May 23, 1950 I sent the following relatively brief reply:

Dear Professor Einstein:

I am very much obliged to you for your reply to my letter. It certainly makes your present position clearer. But in the light of your reply, would it not be a legitimate inference that you no longer believe the following paragraph which appears on page 182 of your book?

> Is it justifiable to set aside for a time the principles of individual freedom in deference to the high endeavor to improve economic organization? A fine and shrewd Russian scholar defended this point of view to me in comparing the success of compulsion and terror—at least at the outset—in a functioning Russian Communism with the failure of German Social Democracy after the war. He did not convince me. No purpose is so high that unworthy methods of achieving it can be justified in my eyes. Violence may have sometimes cleared away obstructions quickly, but it never has proved itself creative.

In your letter of May 16 you indicate that you would have regarded it as your "duty" to make a "*temporary* renunciation of personal independence" and the principles of individual freedom in order to achieve what you consider to be the gains of the Russian people under the Soviet dictatorship. Surely, if the principle of contradiction is still valid, this cannot be squared with the paragraph on page 182. Or am I in error about this?

P.S. There are other interesting questions I shall not trouble you with, e.g., how you know that the sacrifice of individual freedom is only temporary in view of the constant growth of the terror, and what evidence there is that whatever gains have been made could not have been achieved by other methods.

I HARDLY expected a reply to this letter and did not receive one. But his letter of May 16 sorely troubled me. In view of the stream of revelations pouring from the press by individuals who had actually lived in the Soviet Union, I could not bring myself to believe that Einstein could be so uninformed about the true conditions of Soviet life. This was after Stalin's break with his bloody henchman Tito, after the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, and after the Berlin blockade. Nevertheless I resolved to send him firsthand materials on the Soviet Union by individuals who had lived there. And I chose with care books by individuals who had also something to say about the fate of the Jews and those accused of Zionism in the Soviet Union.

One was by Margaret Neumann-Buber, *Under Two Dictators*, in which she related among other gruesome incidents the transfer by Stalin to Hitler, after the Nazi-Soviet Pact, of the Jewish Communists who had fled to the Soviet Union when Hitler came to power. A second was by Jerzy Glicksman, *Tell the West*, the harrowing account of a Polish Jew in Soviet concentration camps. A third, in German, was Eleanor Lipper's *Eleven Years in Stalin's Concentration Camps*. Although I was a hardened reader of Soviet refugee literature, these books had moved me to tears, and I was confident that if Einstein read them his great humane instincts would be aroused and his perspective would be altered on the achievements of the Soviet Union with respect to the areas in which he thought impressive progress had been made.

I was deeply disappointed. Herewith the text of his letter of July 24, 1950:

Dear Professor Hook:

I thank you very much for sending me the two informative books, *Under Two Dictators* and *Tell the West*, and also the one by Mrs. Lipper which I received today; I will try to find time to read them. I do not expect to find anything therein that is new to me in principle. I am trying, however, to form for myself an objective picture of Russian life. Having never been an enthusiast, I cannot be so deeply disappointed by the shortcomings of this vast enterprise.

Naturally I was mystified by Einstein's failure to come to grips with the revelations of the victims of Stalin's terror, for these books and others of their kind, with which he seemed to profess familiarity, contained important information not only about the terror but about the actual conditions of life of the general population in the very fields in which Einstein had believed there were great achievements. I was even more mystified, and remain so, by his silence concerning the brutal treatment of Jews, especially Zionists like Einstein, in the Soviet Union and its satellites. Some day the mystery may be clarified. During the Slansky trials in Czechoslovakia in 1952, when the Western world was shocked by the trials' anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist overtones, I recall that Irving Kristol wrote to Einstein inviting him to make public

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comment on these outrages, but there was no response.

MY NEXT exchange with Einstein began innocently enough in 1952. The Korean war was raging and the Communists had broadcast throughout the world the canard that the United States was waging germ warfare in Korea. Joliot-Curie, the Communist French Nobel Prize winner, issued a statement that he had personally investigated the evidence and found that the allegations against the United States were true. His remarks produced an uproar. I believe it was Norman Thomas, the leading figure on the executive committee of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, who proposed that a round robin be drawn up inviting a number of American Nobel scientists to make public a letter to Joliot-Curie asking him either to withdraw his charge or join them in an objective scientific investigation of the facts. The letters were sent out under my signature as then chairman of the Committee for Cultural Freedom on April 22, 1952. All the invited American Nobelists consented to sign the proposal to Joliot-Curie, with the exception of Albert Einstein.

Einstein replied brusquely April 30, 1952:

Dear Dr. Hook:

I received your letter of April 22nd. I too am disappointed by the insincere attitude of Mr. Joliot-Curie. However, I cannot believe in any favorable effect of such a theatrical counteraction promoted by politicians. I feel, therefore, unable to sign the proposed letter.

P.S. The receivers of the Nobel Prize in science have no right to moral indignation for they have never collectively protested against the military abuses of science, a much more important issue than the present one.

I was shocked and somewhat indignant at the tone of Einstein's letter, and wrote to him on May 6, 1952:

Dear Dr. Einstein:

You have every personal right to refuse to sign the letter to M. Joliot-Curie and to question its efficacy. But you have no moral right to cast slurs at the good name of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom by referring to this letter as a "counter-action promoted by politicians." Our committee is not interested or active in politics from a narrow, partisan point of view. We speak for no political party. We are not a Communist-front organization. We have not solicited your signature under false pretenses.* We are interested in defending those values which are essential to the preservation of a free culture and the life of a free mind and, in this case specifically, in establishing the truth about the grave charges made by Communists the world over about the use of germ warfare by the United States.

As Americans, we are concerned, of course—if these charges are established as false—in clearing the good name of our country, but we are even more concerned with the question of moral responsibility and the intellectual integrity involved in fanning the flames of war and hatred by accusations such as those levelled by M. Joliot-Curie.

We are also convinced that unless these charges are answered, the truth established and broadcast, the probability increases that some day bacteriological warfare will be used by some criminally irresponsible regime.

All we asked of you is that you join other fellow scientists in raising your voice in a request for an *objective inquiry into the truth* of these terrible charges. That you should have regarded this as a "counter-action promoted by politicians" both grieves and mystifies us. We find it all the more mystifying in the light of the fact that you have knowingly lent your name and great scientific authority time and again to many Communist-front groups for exploitation here and abroad. The most recent one was the Communist Waldorf-Astoria "peace" meeting of 1949. Even if we are "politicians"—and perhaps, since we are as unalterably opposed to Communism as to fascism, you may insist on so regarding us—we are at a loss to understand the double standard employed and why our proposal should not be considered on its merits.

Nor do we see the relevancy of the moral indignation expressed in your footnote about the absence of moral indignation by Nobel scientists at the military abuses of science. This is not the primary issue at the moment; primary is the issue of truth, atrocity mongering, and the use of the calculated lie to embroil peoples in war. The military abuse of science began centuries ago and culminated in the use of atomic warfare against the foes of democracy in the last war. We do not know whether Nobel scientists were ever collectively asked to protest the military abuses of science; we do know that some of them did not hesitate to urge upon the governments the possible non-military uses of the liberation of nuclear energy on the eve of World War II. If it is desirable for Nobel scientists to condemn the military abuses of science, as you now seem to think, surely the action we propose at the very least can be considered a step in that direction. We, therefore, see no valid reason why, even believing as you now do, you should refuse to sign the letter to M. Joliot-Curie.

Under separate cover, I am sending you the Freedom Manifesto and other publications of

* I should perhaps state that several years after this letter was written, and when I was no longer chairman of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, I learned that when it was unable to pay its rent, Norman Thomas, a member of the executive committee, telephoned Allen Dulles of the CIA and requested a contribution. Subsequently, when I questioned Thomas about this, he said that he and Dulles had been friends and classmates at Princeton—both being protégés of Woodrow Wilson—and that he had solicited the contribution purely on the basis of his personal friendship. Under the circumstances I was quite dubious about the wisdom of the request. In any case, to the best of my knowledge, at the time my letter to Einstein was written, the American Committee for Cultural Freedom received no clandestine support from the CIA.

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our committee so that you can determine for yourself the nature of our organization.

Einstein's reply to this letter, in German, was the nearest thing to an apology he ever wrote:

Dear Dr. Hook:

I see with regret that you have interpreted my letter in a certain sense as insulting. I am sorry indeed particularly since I subsequently realized that I had not written in that gentle mode of expression attributed to St. Francis. And so I approach the matter once more *sine ira et studio.*

Naturally it is true that as a novice I have stumbled into organizations that operate with decent arguments but dishonest intentions. That is a relatively new stratagem that your special Russian friends have invented.

However with respect to the case before us, I look at the matter in this way. Joliot-Curie has obviously made an assertion of whose accuracy he certainly cannot be convinced. That is really disgraceful for a scientist. Yet one should ask oneself whether it is sensible and justified to make such a huge fuss out of the incident. What would be accomplished thereby? The Soviet Russian public would certainly not be affected by it, and the public in the West was in no way influenced by Joliot's declaration. The proposed step can at best have only one consequence, to unleash in the Western public a new wave of hate against the East. Such a result from my point of view is harmful to international development. A viable modus vivendi between East and West simply cannot be founded on hatred.

Further, it can hardly be wondered at that a government is suspected of using that kind of "weapon," when its systematic development is broadcast to the public in our press, not without pride and satisfaction. Under the circumstances would you not also agree that silence is always better than accusations?

THE question with which Einstein closed his letter gave me the peg for my rejoinder:

Dear Dr. Einstein:

In reply to the question with which you concluded your letter of May 7th, I am firmly convinced that the policy of silence is not the policy of wisdom in respect to the charge of M. Joliot-Curie. Nor, as the text of the letter to him shows, is the request made of Joliot-Curie likely to inspire hate among decent people. The letter is written in a sober, reasonable tone and asks only that he withdraw the charge or join the other Nobel Prize scientists in asking for an objective investigation by an impartial international body.

There are two assumptions in your reply which conflict with the evidence in our possession—viz., that we cannot reach the peoples behind the Iron Curtain, and that public opinion in democratic countries is not affected by the wild charges made against the United Nations and the United States. There are many ways in which the publication of the letter to M. Joliot-Curie can be brought to the attention of the satellite countries and even the population of the Soviet Union. We know that the events, for example, in which Madame Kosenkina was involved in New York were known a few hours later in Moscow.*

Much more important is the fact, attested to by a great deal of evidence from the press, that charges about germ warfare are being given audience in Western European countries and Asiatic countries. This is unfortunate but true. Official denials by American authorities are brushed aside as meaningless. The letter of the Nobel Prize scientists cannot be so treated, particularly since it requests an objective investigation. Our French committee informs us that the letter made a great impression on French public opinion.

I feel you underestimate the effect of the calculated lie on public thought and feeling. When I was a boy in high school I was denounced as pro-German in 1917, and almost expelled, for challenging the universal belief among my teachers that the German army systematically cut off the hands of Belgian children, and that it used human corpses to derive much needed fat for industry. After the war, these tales were laughingly revealed as wonderful propaganda.

In consequence, when the first news came out about Hitler's cremation camps, Stalin's forced labor camps, and similar outrages against mankind, many people dismissed them as more atrocity stories.

They didn't turn out to be atrocity stories. The feeling now is that any piece of barbarism is possible and the Soviets are making excellent use of this new mood of credulity. The immoral thing about these carefully planted lies is that if they are believed they make people fanatical to the death in fighting those who are lied about. If the lies are finally exposed, the result is likely to be invincible incredulity to atrocities when they do occur.

That is why it is of the first importance to build up the moral authority of some international organization which can speak with the full weight of science and objectivity behind it. The world will listen to any group to which Nobel Prize scientists give support, especially on matters so close to scientific fact. In this way, in the terrible years which lie ahead, public opinion can avoid the extremes of credulity and incredulity for something closer to scientific skepticism.

I have been in Europe often during the last few years. I have been shocked to discover that because of Communist propaganda, the United States is hated and feared more than Hitler's Germany was in 1939. I am not denying that there may be, and are, other causes too, but it is simply incredible what lies are told about the United States and believed. I am old-fashioned enough to believe that truth is the best answer to the propaganda of the lie—not counter-propaganda. But I have learned enough

* Madame Kosenkina was an employee of the Russian consulate in New York who in 1948 jumped to freedom from the consulate windows.

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from modern psychology to know that silence is no answer at all.

That is why, dear Dr. Einstein, I cannot accept your method of fighting for freedom and peace. Just as neither Christian love nor Trappist silence would have deflected Hitler, so they will fail with Stalin. The only thing that could have prevented Hitler from going to war was *both* an adequate defense in the West and making the truth known to the German people about what was happening in Germany, and what Hitler had in store for them. And having studied Stalin's mind for twenty-five years, I am convinced that the only thing that will prevent him from giving the signal for war is an adequate defense in the West and knowledge of the *truth* about the West among the peoples of the Soviet Union.

It is as a contribution to the truth that the American Committee for Cultural Freedom endorsed the letter of the Nobel Prize scientists to M. Joliot-Curie.

This brought another friendly response from Einstein, also in German, dated July 27, 1952:

Dear Mr. Hook,

With regard to your letter of July 25 I should like to make the following observation. Personally I find it improbable that accusations will have any successful results. I would welcome it if an agreement could be brought about for carrying through an objective investigation of the case in question. Such an argument, I am convinced, would contribute to an improvement in international relations. On the other hand, one should not become indignant in the face of such accusations so long as one has not accepted the obligation to forswear the first use of *bacteriological* weapons.

On October 26, 1952 I wrote to Einstein again:

Dear Dr. Einstein:

The New York *Times* recently carried an abbreviated report of a letter which you sent to some individuals in Japan explaining the necessity which moved you and your co-workers to recommend research on the development of the atomic bomb. Judging from the newspaper story, my impression is that your letter is both enlightening and important on a matter which has troubled many people. I wonder whether it would be possible for me to procure the full text of the statement. Since the story was published in the newspaper, I assume that the communication which you sent to Japan was not of a personal nature.

In response Einstein was kind enough to send me the German text of his reply to *Kaizo* with a bitter complaint that the publication of the bowdlerized version in the New York *Times* was a beautiful example of what he used to call telling "lies through the truth." I do not recall his writing to the New York *Times,* nor did he expect me to do so since he indicated in his lettter that the material he sent me was confidential, for my personal information only. I never understood why he requested me to keep his answer confidential; it contained nothing he had not already written elsewhere. I present it in translation herewith:

My participation in the development of the atomic bomb consisted in one single action. I signed a letter to President Roosevelt which stressed the necessity of undertaking large-scale experiments to investigate the possibility of producing an atomic bomb.

I was quite conscious of the terrible danger that the success of this undertaking held for mankind. But the probability that the Germans would work on the same problem with prospects of success compelled me to take this step. I had no other choice *despite the fact that I was always a convinced pacifist.* To kill in war according to my conception is no better than ordinary murder.

So long, however, as the nations of the world have not decided by common action to abolish war and to solve their conflicts and defend their interests by peaceful decisions based on law, they will feel compelled to prepare themselves for war. They see themselves compelled—all of them—to arm themselves with the most contemptible means in order not to be surpassed in the general arms race. This road leads necessarily to war which under present-day conditions spells universal destruction.

Under these circumstances, struggle against the means of war has no prospects of success. Only the radical abolition of war and the danger of war can be of any help. That is what one should work for, and to be resolved not to permit oneself to be compelled to engage in any actions that run counter to this goal. This is a severe demand on any individual who is aware of his social dependence. But it is not an impossible demand to meet.

Gandhi, the greatest political genius of our time, has indicated the way. He showed what sacrifices mankind is capable of making when it has recognized the right way. His work of liberation for India is living evidence of the fact that a will ruled by firm convictions is stronger than apparently unconquerable material force.

EINSTEIN's position was such an extreme defense of absolute pacifism and the Gandhian way of combating evil that I felt I owed him an explanation of why I could not accept his point of view. I sent the following letter to him on November 10, 1952:

Dear Dr. Einstein:

I was very much moved by the noble statement you sent to *Kaizo* and feel it is a pity that the full text was not released in this country, too.

The subject you discuss is the most fateful of our time. The position of Gandhi (and of Tolstoy) has always seemed to me to be a live option, and I have often been tempted to embrace it when reflecting on the bitter cost of even the best victory. One thing has deterred me, viz., the realization that Gandhi could have been successful only with the British or a people

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with the same high human values. I am afraid he would have failed utterly with the Japanese military, with the Gestapo and SS, and the Soviet MVD. What is even worse, the new methods of "scientific" torture would have reduced him to a broken-spirited, miserable wreck of a man, stuttering back the confessions suggested by a cunning and cruel prompter manipulating the coercions of hunger, pain, and crazed desire for sleep or even death.

I do not know whether you have read, or remember, Weissberg's book on his experiences in the hands of the GPU, and how narrowly he escaped from becoming a groveling, crawling creature—a mockery of a man. This was twelve years ago or more, and since then the diabolical techniques of unmaking the mind and degrading the person have been perfected. No, I fear not even Gandhi could have withstood them, and few human beings had Gandhi's spiritual discipline.

When I think of how many millions of Jews permitted themselves to be slaughtered in what was in effect a passive resistance to evil, I find myself wishing that they had died like the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto. It sounds smug and hollow to say that when one must die in any event, one should do it nobly. Perhaps one should try only not to die ignobly.

That is why I cannot accept a position which seems to be one of unilateral pacifism, in the face of an enemy who degrades before he kills. Even my good friend, Norman Thomas, recognizes that unilateral disarmament today would provoke Stalin to reach out his hands for the necks of all free men. And that is why if I were a scientist, and if I thought that the Kremlin had the remotest prospect of inventing a hydrogen bomb, with a heavy heart I would make the same decision you made in 1939.

And unless one believes life itself is an evil, surely your decision at that time was justified by the tragic events—was it not? The loss of life would have been no less, and perhaps more, if the bomb had not been used—although I never could understand why no demonstration was made on an uninhabited island as a warning to induce surrender. The Russians, anyhow, would have taken up the bomb where the Germans left it, even if we had not worked on it. You know what life under the Nazis was, and if you ever have spoken as I have in West Berlin to the simple Russian men and women who fled from the Soviet sphere, you would know that life there is not much different.

But, forgive me for going on this way—I didn't intend to write at such length.

I did not expect a reply from Einstein to my long screed. I had counterposed my faith to his and thought he would let the matter rest. I was therefore pleasantly surprised to receive another friendly note dated November 12, 1952:

Dear Mr. Hook:

You are right that under the circumstances that have developed in the last twenty years (not *only* through the fault of the Russians) a sudden transition to the methods of Gandhi could not be ventured by any responsible statesman. I see the only possibility of improving the situation in abandoning the armament race and issues productive of conflict. Naturally the first step would be the neutralization and demilitarization of Germany. Despite the evil methods of the Russians, I regard as completely false the point of view that would represent them or treat them as common criminals. At the very least, from an education standpoint, any such attitude is impermissible.

I was not aware of anyone who had proposed that the Russians be treated as common criminals. Even those who had opposed the presence of Soviet representatives on the judges' bench at Nuremberg had not urged that they be put in the dock. I found it noteworthy that although Einstein conceded my point about the utopian character of the Gandhian approach, he insisted that the first step required the neutralization and demilitarization of Germany. In effect, this would mean the demilitarization and neutralization of West Germany, not East Germany. It was natural, in view of his own personal experience, that he should fear the Germans more than the Russians or Japanese or Chinese. His attitude was typical of German Jewish refugees of almost every social stratum. It was not that they had any genuine sympathy for Communism—except for those who before the rise of Hitler had thrown in their lot with the Kremlin—but that their hatred of Germany and their acceptance of the doctrine of collective guilt made them willing to accept any initiative that would punish their former persecutors and their descendants. It was psychologically understandable but politically unwise.

THE letter of November 12, 1952 was the last letter I received from Einstein. Nor did I write him again. But I did hear indirectly from Einstein in 1954 when he sent a German reply to Norman Thomas, who had written him on March 9, 1954 explaining why he could not join in the birthday celebration for Einstein then being prepared by the Emergency Committee for Civil Liberties. Einstein asked Thomas to show his reply to me so that I could translate it. He drily observed that I, too, would be interested in the contents. But first the letter of Norman Thomas:

My dear Doctor Einstein:

It is with deep regret that I am declining an invitation to a conference and luncheon in your honor at the Nassau Tavern in Princeton, N.J. on Saturday, March 13th.

I share the respect and admiration for you that is felt by millions of people throughout the world. We cannot pay too great honor to the man who has given us a new conception of the physical universe; the man who, more than any other, gave us mastery over the awful power of the atom. With it all, you have stood with prophetic earnestness for the dignity and freedom of man, above all for his right to know.

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Nevertheless, I must decline to express my appreciation by coming to your birthday celebration. The reason is that prominent and dominant personalities in the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee which has arranged this celebration have shown through the years anything but a consistent love of liberty, in or out of the academic field. I say this with regret but with knowledge born of long years of work in the field of civil liberties. I am thoroughly persuaded, as I think you are, that the test of freedom in America and indeed among thoughtful men everywhere is a capacity to oppose both Communism and the thing that in America we call McCarthyism. These two movements interact to help each other. Unfortunately, persons now leading the Emergency Committee have steadily condoned, if they did not actually defend, Communist crimes against liberty, which crimes are inherent in the doctrine and practice of a conspiratorial movement seeking universal power over the bodies, minds, and souls of men. These men and women work under a double standard which I am sure you do not accept.

This committee has circulated your replies to five questions submitted to you on the meaning of academic freedom. Your replies restate forcefully and carefully your well-known position. It is a position which I heartily accept with one qualification: I cannot agree with you that it is an infringement on liberty for proper authorities in the state, in the university, or the schools, to raise a question concerning the *allegiance* of men who seek posts in which it is of the utmost importance that their allegiance should be solely to their consciences in search of truth. It is allegiance to Communism as a dictatorial conspiracy, not as a heresy, which warrants proper inquiries under proper circumstances. The right to stay out of jail is not the right to hold every sort of position. It isn't the right to guide the young, who, if they are to build a more glorious democracy, cannot have their faith in freedom impaired, or their allegiance won, by any organization, Communist or fascist, which denied personal freedom. This truth is not negated by the blameworthy tactics of congressional committees.

Your answer to questions on academic freedom in the document which has reached my desk ends with an appeal from you or the committee—it is not clear which—for funds: "the collection and use of which should be put in the hands of a small organization under the supervision of persons known to be trustworthy." I should not for a moment challenge the integrity of the Emergency Committee in using funds for the defense of persons fully entitled to their day in court. But I am compelled to express regret that the committee has appropriated your great name for a concept of freedom far different from yours. There are rights to which Communists, fascists, and their fellow-travelers and apologists are clearly entitled, but civil liberties cannot effectively be defended by Americans who through the years have condoned its absolute denial in the Soviet Union, while rushing hurriedly to the aid of men into whose primary political allegiance some sort of inquiry may be warranted.

ALTHOUGH I approved in general of Norman Thomas's letter (it was based on a distinction I had proposed between heresy and conspiracy), I would have restated some of his positions to indicate that not the violation of political allegiance but the violation of accepted standards of professional ethics is involved in barring conspirators from positions of public trust. Both Norman Thomas and Roger Baldwin, the leading figures in those days in the American Civil Liberties Union (which now unfortunately has fallen into the hands of those who opposed them), believed that with respect to employment, anyone who owed a primary allegiance to a foreign government was unfit to serve in his own, and certainly not in any post regarded as sensitive. After all, the Nazi-American Bund and the American Communist party made no secret of where their primary political allegiance lay. Aside from strict government service, however, in schools, universities, and research centers, the criterion must not be political allegiance but allegiance to the standards of professional ethics enforced by committees of one's peers.

Einstein replied promptly to Norman Thomas:

Dear Norman Thomas:

I was very pleased to receive a letter from you, for I felt instinctively that you are one of the few whose every word carries true conviction, untarnished by hidden intentions. One feels, as well, your good will toward all. This encourages me to answer you as if I were speaking to an old friend.

The very beginning of your letter puts me in a happy mood. There you deplore that you have declined an invitation, as if I myself had invited you to that function. In reality, this function has something to do with my person only insofar as those who arranged it used my name and my birthday—both of which are not to my taste.

However, the fact which in a certain sense puts me under obligation is that this group has stood for civil rights with decisiveness and in a sense which is close to my convictions. When I declined to come to a function of that sort or to act as sponsor for the committee (that is to say, for the function), I suggested this: Send me some questions. I'll answer them in writing to the best of my ability. This was done. I do not know anything about the people who actually head up that committee, nor is it known to me what that committee has done in the past.

Now I come to the principal point, namely, to the question whether the position I took in my answers is objectively justified. In any case, I personally am fully convinced of this. I see with a great deal of disquiet the far-reaching analogy between Germany of 1932 and the USA of 1954.

On *one* point we are of the same opinion. Russia is, in a very clear sense, a "politically underdeveloped country," about like Europe at

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the time of the Renaissance and a bit later. Murder, with and without legalistic accoutrements, has become a commonplace means of daily politics. The citizen enjoys no rights and no security against arbitrary interference from the power of the state. Science and art have become wards of those who govern.

All this is certainly abominable to the taste of modern civilized man. But I believe that it is the problem of the Russian people to make changes there. We cannot advance a progressive development there by threatening Russia from the outside. Similarly, our well-intentioned criticism cannot help because it will not come to the ears of the Russians.

It seems to me, therefore, more useful to confine ourselves to the following question: How about the danger which America faces from the side of its own Communists? Here is the principal difference of opinion between you and me. In short, I believe: America is incomparably less endangered by its own Communists than by the hysterical hunt for the few Communists there are here (including those fellow citizens whose red tinge is weaker, *à la* Jefferson). Why should America be so much more endangered than England by the English Communists? Or is one to believe that the English are politically more naive than the Americans so that they do not realize the danger they are in? No one there works with inquisitions, suspicions, oaths, etc., and still "subversives" do not go unchecked. There, no teachers and no university professors have been thrown out of their jobs, and the Communists there appear to have even less influence than formerly.

In my eyes, the "Communist conspiracy" is principally a slogan used in order to put those who have no judgment and who are cowards into a condition which makes them entirely defenseless. Again, I must think back to Germany of 1932, whose democratic social body had already been weakened by similar means, so that shortly thereafter Hitler was able to deal it the death-blow with ease. I am similarly convinced that those here will go the same way unless men with vision and willingness to sacrifice come to the defense.

Now you will clearly see our difference of opinion. Who is right cannot be decided through a logical process of proof. The future will tell. . . .

I CONTENT myself with only two observations on Einstein's letter. (I assumed Norman Thomas wrote a rejoinder. Otherwise, since Einstein asked him to show the letter to me, I would have written.)

Einstein was not the only one who regarded Joseph McCarhy's meteoric demagogic flight, which came crashing down into oblivion in that very year 1954, as a prelude to the triumph of fascism in America. Bertrand Russell actually made a wager with Malcolm Muggeridge that Senator McCarthy would be elected President of the United States! It was a pity the bet was for only five pounds.

With respect to the questions Einstein asked, I had treated them in detail several years earlier in an essay on "Security and Freedom" published in *Confluence*, a periodical edited by Henry Kissinger at Harvard. I specifically addressed myself to the differences between the English and American security systems and showed that public servants suspected of being security risks enjoyed far greater legal protection in the United States than in Great Britain. The essay is reprinted in my *Political Power and Personal Freedom*. I had sent a copy to Einstein but he had obviously not read it, or my articles on ideologically inspired treason and espionage in the New York *Times Magazine* during the early 50's.

This was long before the startling disclosures of the vast penetration of Britain's security services by the Soviet KGB and the disastrous consequences for hundreds of human beings, not to mention the advantages thereby given to the Soviet Union in becoming privy to practically all the secret details of Western foreign policy. This penetration resulted primarily from British indifference to the early ideological commitments of those recruited for official posts. It also reflected the view current in many circles in the United States that the Communist parties of the world were not really different from other political parties and that their members, despite their submission in those days to the absolute control of the Kremlin, should enjoy the same rights and privileges to government employment as members of other political parties. This questionable view is still held within ritualistic, as opposed to realistic, liberal circles.

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What Economists Know

Melville J. Ulmer

VIGOROUS disputes are common among experts in the natural sciences but normally erupt at the unexplored frontiers, when critical facts or experiments are lacking. Not so in economics. Disagreements persist today over fundamental relationships, basic "laws," and hoary doctrines, some of which have been around for a century or more. Furthermore, they survive intransigently, in the face of about as much empirical and theoretical knowledge as can most likely be assembled now or in the foreseeable future. There is no denying that passions are involved, often in the most respected circles. At stake are political commitments as well as academic reputations, emotions as well as fame, against which the reputed dispassionate harmony of scholarly academe is as ineffectual as a parasol in a hurricane. It is as though the economics profession were torn asunder by profound divisions of faith, impervious to the appeals of reason.

Consider, for example, Nobel laureates Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek on the one side, and Nobel laureates Paul Samuelson and James Tobin on the other. Despite the impeccable credentials of each, and despite the fervor each publicly exhibits in his views, the two sides agree on practically nothing. Staunchly, they have remained in these opposing positions for at least two decades. Nor does either group suggest that it awaits only the appearance of some new and critical data for verification. They insist they know the answers now. Clearly one side or the other must be wrong, or both.

Nor is the reason for such stubborn wrangling simply the impenetrability of the subject matter, the scarcity of dependable knowledge, or the impossibility (in the social sciences generally) of settling disputes with controlled experiments. Economics has been called "the queen of the social sciences" just because most of its variables are quantifiable. With millions of government clerks grinding out mountains of statistics daily, there is no dearth of factual information. The rules of logic are as readily accessible to economists as to anyone else. Persuasive evidence would appear to be serviceably at hand to confirm or deny many economic propositions. Even experiments of a kind are possible which, while not strictly controlled, can be repeated in varying situations. What remains in opposition are articles of faith, precious to particular "schools" of thought, in which political biases as well as personal advantages are heavily invested.

Examples abound of disputes that range beyond reason, but most of these center around the fundamental clash in social philosophy that splits the four economists named above. It is the critical contest for economic policy today, engaging conservative classicists on the Right and liberals of various hues on the Left. Most prominent among the latter are neo-Keynesians, or economic "demand-siders," who more or less dominated the nation's social strategy from 1948 until 1980. "Other things being equal"—as they are wont to say—they favor governmental decision-making over the market. They long for a progressive "leveling" in the distribution of income. Their eager opponents are the "supply-siders" who moved to center stage with the Reagan administration. The more extreme among them favor the market over government almost to the point of old-time laissez-faire. Substantial inequalities in income, allowing incentives for effort and ambition, are in their eyes essential not only for industrial progress but for individual freedom.

Both Right and Left support opposing pet theories for stabilizing the economy, to which they cling despite past experience that most bystanders would consider discouraging. Their efforts to avoid cycles of inflation and depression were given long and loving trials in turn, one in the decades before 1932 and one later, with results that in public estimation ranged from deeply disturbing to disastrous. Naturally, both sides question that evaluation, at least as it bears on their own strategies, on the ground that in one signif-

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icant detail or another their advice was disregarded. Another possible view is that of George J. W. Goodman (a.k.a. "Adam Smith") who recently wrote: "Having been part of the solution, economics has become part of the problem."

In its broadest terms, supply-side economics goes back to (the original) Adam Smith, and with modification here or there has remained a part of Western tradition ever since. Irving Kristol has summarized its five "bedrock truths" as follows:

> (1) The overwhelming majority of men and women are naturally and incorrigibly interested in improving their material conditions; (2) efforts to repress this natural desire lead only to coercive and impoverished politics; (3) when this natural desire is given sufficient latitude so that commercial transactions are not discouraged, economic growth does take place; (4) as a result of such growth, everyone does eventually indeed improve his condition, however unequally in extent or time; (5) such economic growth results in a huge expansion of the property-owning middle class—a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for a liberal society in which individual rights are respected.

Probably the vast majority of Americans, with the principal exception of the intellectual Left, would accept these tenets as consistent with personal experience and the lessons of history. There is much less agreement about their specific implications for public policy. How far can and should we go toward providing full leeway for individual self-interest and the unrestricted decisions of the free market? Perhaps the most controversial of all the supposed injunctions is the admonition that we must abide by Say's Law.

This so-called law, named for an early expositor of Smith, states that *supply creates its own demand.* No one would produce, said Jean Baptiste Say two centuries ago, without an intention to consume or invest the proceeds. Therefore, the income generated by production—in wages, salaries, profits, etc.—must always be just enough to purchase the supply. A general glut of output, in that setting, is impossible—a proposition which inevitably provokes the question, what of depressions? The answer is that in the earliest days of modern capitalism, with free-market activities only in the process of spreading, business cycles were unknown, though of course there were problems to spare aside from that. Writing in the closing decade of the 18th century, Say undoubtedly meant the law to apply in the *long run,* as possibly it does. It was the later economists of the 19th and 20th centuries who converted the broad, impressionistic Smithian theory into a tight, purely abstract mathematical model.

MODERN versions of the old classical theory exchange the keen though casual observations of its founders for the precise postulations and impeccable deductions of Euclidean geometry. In such models of the economy, time is ruled out, reactions are assumed to be instantaneous, and the actors—buyers and sellers—are presumed to have perfect knowledge in perfectly competitive markets. Hence, in the short run as well as the long run those who wish to do so can "prove" that a free economy will gravitate naturally toward full employment without inflation. Were goods to remain unsold, to the temporary discomfort of producers, either of two correctives would quickly appear. Prices would decline, thus encouraging purchases, or, since consumers were spending less, they would save and invest more. In either case, full employment would be preserved, and the possibility of a cumulative slide, with falling sales leading to lower incomes and investment, would be effectively excluded. Efforts by government to intervene are therefore held to be self-defeating. For example, defensive fiscal or monetary measures would only worsen the impact of an "exogenous shock" (like the 1929 stock market crash) by blocking natural forces of recovery. So says Say's Law, and to this day many learned heads nod in solemn acquiescence, both in academe and in the federal offices of the more pietistic supply-siders.

But there are other supply-siders besides the pietistic ones. Pulling and tugging within the broad official or unofficial entourage of the Reagan administration are three distinguishable groups. Budget balancers like David Stockman, Herbert Stein, and Arthur Burns believe that the principal key to enduring prosperity is to cut government spending down to the level of tax revenue. Monetarists like Milton Friedman and Beryl Sprinkel are convinced that the overriding need is to grasp control of the money supply, limiting its growth to the long-run advance of productivity and population. Tax reducers like Arthur Laffer, Paul Craig Roberts, Norman Ture, and Jack Kemp believe that cutting taxes radically would unleash a flood of work energy, investment, and innovation that would swiftly revitalize the economy, balance the budget, and reduce unemployment and inflation to the status of unpleasant memories. Obviously President Reagan has borrowed something from all three groups, though not to the full satisfaction of any one of them.

What supply-siders in general have in common are (1) their firm rejection of "demand-side" neo-Keynesian economics; (2) their classical emphasis on the central role of individual enterprise and business investment in generating economic progress; and (3) their belief in the approximate validity of Say's Law—although here the more pragmatic budget balancers, like Stein and Burns, take highly qualified or dissenting positions. Toward the first two points, public sentiment has grown preponderantly favorable, though no doubt weakened somewhat by the 1981-82 recession. On the

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third, both a large part of the public and their elected representatives would manifestly be wary. At any rate there is an obligation to test this plank, as well as the first, against whatever evidence history can afford. Just how strong, in fact, are the natural recuperative powers of a free economy?

When we look back at the record for evidence, the plight of the unfortunate Herbert Hoover in 1929 looms like a pyramid in the Giza desert. He consulted the leading economists of his time, ultraconservatives all. His public assurance that prosperity was "just around the corner," issued on their authority, was dutifully repeated for the next three years. Obtuseness perhaps, but not callousness, accounts for his failure to do much else but talk in history's greatest economic crisis. For Hoover shared an abiding faith with Joseph Schumpeter, Frank Knight (Milton Friedman's mentor), Jacob Viner, Friedrich Hayek, Irving Fisher, and most other economic luminaries of the day. Specifically, the faith was in Say's Law.

The relevant evidence, however, does not start and stop with the Great Depression. From the 1870's through the 1920's, an era of almost unqualified laissez-faire, three giant depressions (excluding that of the 1930's) plus sixteen smaller but severe contractions shook the nation with the customary spasms of mass unemployment, foreclosures, and bankruptcies.* All the larger business cycles were worldwide; and in two instances—Italy and Germany—they were fatal. In the most abundantly documented study of this experience, Wesley Clair Mitchell, America's foremost authority on business cycles, demonstrated what Karl Marx from an entirely different point of view had only surmised: that a private enterprise economy moves *naturally* in waves. One phase of a business cycle inescapably gives rise to the next in a "self-generating" oscillation. Typically, economic expansions generate a surge of investment that cannot possibly be sustained, while in downturns unsatisfied (and often unpostponable) demands accumulate.

But this is but one of a myriad of synergistically interrelated impulses, unraveled by Mitchell, that mold the cyclical pattern of business. It is mainly the timing and the intensity of the fluctuations that vary. Ominously, he found, the major cycles alternate unpredictably with the smaller ones. Whatever support there is for Say's Law must be located in stubborn hope or in the arcane mathematics of abstract, otherworldly speculative theories.†

For their part, the neo-Keynesians on the Left have been equally disdainful of what most bystanders might consider readily available evidence. They have clung just as tenaciously to what must be termed a professionally exalted myth. The unplanned legacy of the great John Maynard Keynes was what came to be, after World War II, the dominant school led by Samuelson, Tobin, Walter Heller, the late Arthur Okun, and Lawrence Klein. This group proclaimed—and most of its members still do—that the business cycle is dead in theory and *ought* to be dead in fact. Their knowledge of fiscal and monetary policy, they say, would enable them to maintain a virtually unaltered state of full employment without inflation, *if only* the politicians of this world would heed their advice with sufficient alacrity.

But once again the awkward record of history conflicts with shallow hopes and theoretical speculation. How valid can the neo-Keynesian claim be when its advice was influential as early as the 1950's and then officially dominant during the next twenty years? Remember that even President Nixon, with only semi-jocular innocence, asked, "Aren't we all Keynesians now?" In his brief term of office President Ford displayed similar credentials, though gracelessly unacknowledged by conventional liberals. Under Kennedy, Johnson, and Carter, the neo-Keynesians themselves occupied the official drivers' seats. That long-term experiment should be enough to discredit what Heller and his colleagues, in their halcyon days, proclaimed to be the "New Economics."

In the thirty-two years from 1948 to 1980 there were eight recessions of generally increasing gravity, with unemployment rising to progressively higher peaks. Most disturbing of all was the swiftly mounting inflation which started walking in the 1950's, trotting in the 1960's, and galloping in the next decade. Throughout the entire period since World War II the price level rose in every year except two: 1949 and 1954. From 1950 to 1980, consumers prices rose by 350 percent. In the fateful last two years of that period the average annual inflation rate was 13 percent—enough to double the cost of living in less than six years—while unemployment hovered between 6 and 8 percent of the labor force. There was no way, without blatantly courting disaster, that the conventional Keynesian measures could be used to combat either inflation or unemployment, and certainly not both at the same time. One positive credit that President Reagan deserves is that he did not try that route.

The fatal error of the neo-Keynesians was the mirror image of that of the supply-siders. Their hang-up was and is Keynes's Law: that *demand* creates its own *supply*. It was a dictum that the

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* All according to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the national arbiter in recording business cycles.

† One of the earliest mathematic models of the kind, and certainly the most famous, is that of Leon Walras (1837-1910), hailed by Joseph Schumpeter as the greatest economist of all time. My own choice would be David Ricardo, followed closely by Smith and more distantly by Keynes and Mitchell.

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master had devised for the Great Depression, hardly a typical situation. The stunning extravagance of the neo-Keynesians was to generalize. Their resulting policy prescription, enshrined in all but some of the more recent textbooks, is worth repeating here. When unemployment threatens to be excessive, any one or all of the following three actions are indicated: increase government expenditures, reduce taxes, and/or expand the money supply to lower the rate of interest. These measures, of course, are supposed to raise demand and lift employment. When inflation appears, the prescription calls for the opposite tack: reduce government expenditures, elevate tax rates, and/or contract the money supply to raise the rate of interest. These tactics, they thought, should reduce demand and lower the price level.

In practice, the prescription was followed with reasonable precision for thirty years. Even the conservative and—so it was thought—economically naive President Eisenhower jiggled defense expenditures with an eye to their impact on demand and the general level of business activity. From then on, the neo-Keynesian formula in full was gospel. But unfortunately for the nation, demand stubbornly refused to create its own supply. More reliably, it raised the price level. The result was the well-known roller-coaster pattern in which ever-eager "stabilizers" fought inflation by provoking unemploment, then fought unemployment by provoking inflation, only to find that from one cycle to the next both were getting worse.

We must note for the sake of completeness that after a time neo-Keynesians conceded that something else was needed—something other than their fiscal and monetary formula. Their answer was an "incomes policy," by which they have meant some form of "voluntary" wage and price controls, along with—a point emphasized by some more than others—a judicious use of income taxes and the welfare system to siphon more income from the richer to the poorer. But as any wide-awake observer knows, all these devices were put into practice, especially in the Kennedy, Johnson, and Carter administrations, and in one respect Nixon went a step further, with *mandatory* wage-price controls. However, no discernible improvement in result was evident. The voluntary systems of direct control reliably crumbled just when they were needed, as soon as demand pressure mounted in a period of expansion. Nixon's experiment confirmed a long-established verity: that once mandatory controls are dismantled, as sooner or later they must be, the result is a price explosion worse than the one temporarily suppressed.

In a profession in which fixations seem the rule rather than the exception, it should come as no surprise that such failures have served to invigorate rather than still the liberal call for more government intervention. Nor could it have been unexpected that, interspersed with hurried rebuttals to the Republican response, there would be cries of moral "outrage," more unrestrained as one moves leftward in the neo-Keynesian political spectrum toward radicals and the penumbra of Marx. Robert Lekachman, for example, finds that President Reagan's primary political objective is to "enrich the already obscenely rich," a passage that might have been borrowed from a dog-eared copy of *Left-Wing Orations for all Occasions*. In his latest book, *Greed Is Not Enough*, Lekachman summarizes his own, "progressive" program as a "mandatory incomes policy, political direction of investment, redistributive taxation, and . . . democratic planning."

In this work as well as in those of others on Lekachman's side, tempers flare most notably at the thought of income inequalities. Even so experienced a practitioner as Lester Thurow of MIT can excitably use statistics on this point with the skill of a free-spirited high-school debater. "Welfare," he explained to an audience in 1980, "constitutes only 1.2 percent of the GNP." But according to the Social Security administration, the true figure is 20 percent of the GNP, and also 60 percent of the combined federal, state, and local budget, including in "welfare" Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Medicaid, food stamps, training programs, unemployment insurance, housing assistance, public-service employment, child nutrition, food distributions, and scores of related outlays. Of all these programs and the others not listed, Thurow must have stopped counting when he came to the first. To the question, "How much equality do I want?" Lekachman (in concert with Thurow, Tobin, Herbert J. Gans, Gar Alperovitz, and other associates) answers: "More!" With greater precision, their late colleague Arthur Okun set an "ethical" goal of *full* "equality in the distribution of incomes," a situation which, if applied to the world (and without the mischief of disincentives and the imprisonment of individual proclivities), would establish a standard income for all humanity at considerably less than one-half the present U.S. official poverty level.

As practical matters for public consideration, the questions raised by those Left of Center could hardly have been less relevant to the problems confronting Ronald Reagan when he took office in January 1981. His economic inheritance was the cumulative burden of all the policy blunders of the preceding twenty years. Its symptoms were stagnant economic growth and the most unfavorable combination of inflation (at a 13 percent annual rate) and unemployment (at more than 7 percent) in modern history. Yet, for him, the legacy was a double-edged bonanza. Without the mess, he never would have been elected. With it, common sense alone dictated the immediate courses of action, however difficult in execution. The bloated deficit had to be re-

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duced, both because of its inflationary impact and the often flabby programs and political irresponsibilities it sheltered. Marginal tax rates on the middle class, inexorably lifted by "bracket creep," had to be moderated to inspire work effort, saving, and investment. Productivity had staggered and then dropped in the preceding decade. For comparable reasons the growing burden of taxes and costly regulations on business had to be eased. The inflationary expansion of the money supply had to be slowed.

True enough, finding the appropriate combination of these measures proved to be difficult, not to mention winning and retaining congressional cooperation. Tight money discouraged investment while tax reductions widened the deficit. The predictable recession raised unemployment as it always does. Further budgetary economies, which might have relieved the pressure in markets for credit, met cagey Democratic opposition after an initial year of détente. Still, the immediate, pressing objective of checking inflation made unexpectedly impressive progress and, by the late spring of 1982, the slide in output and employment had perceptibly slowed.

If the President's ardent hopes are realized and a business recovery without inflation ensues, it may well be safe to say, with a collective sigh, three cheers for the year ahead—since expansions seldom last less than a year. But it would probably be safer to add to common sense, "Thank you, I'll call again when I need you." For there is a remaining question that could haunt us all, that calls distinctly for uncommon sense: what next?

What will follow if, as the Reagan administration hopes and intends, a reasonable framework for economic progress is put in place, including refreshed incentives, a prudently managed budget, and an effective rein on the money supply? Granted that, together, they would inspire productivity and set a friendly stage for long-term investment. Can they also curb the destructive spates of instability that have plagued Western society since the industrial revolution? History seems to say that the unpredictable bouncing ball of cyclical fluctuations does not come to rest so easily.

Business cycles, in short, have been a reality in the past and are part of the future prospect of any private-enterprise economy. Wishing, and a faith in Say's Law, will not make them go away. Neither, however, will a return to the rituals of neo-Keynesian economics. The utopian dream of wiping them out, precious to radical "planners," is no more feasible than curing a headache with decapitation. A totalitarian state could do it, but only with its own style of social surgery. The alternative, in a free economy, is to learn to ride the waves of business activity without the precarious pitches and rolls of unemployment and inflation. That requires institutional strength and resiliency; whether the Reagan administration can establish these qualities over the longer term remains to be seen.

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Mordecai M. Kaplan in Retrospect

Seymour Siegel

In Philip Roth's story, "The Conversion of the Jews," the young protagonist Ozzie Freedman, aged thirteen, wants to know how Rabbi Binder can call the Jews the chosen people "if the Declaration of Independence claimed all men to be created equal." To be properly appreciated in the context of the American Jewish experience, this remark should be juxtaposed with one made by my grandfather, an immigrant from Eastern Europe, "*America iz a goldene medineh—ober a klog oyf Columbus'n*" (freely translated, "America is a golden land—but a curse on Columbus").

These two observations point up some of the ambiguities generated by the mass immigration of Jews to America. They are ambiguities over which many have pondered, and which have been made the stuff of sociological studies, historical treatises, sermons, and fiction galore. Among Jewish *religious* thinkers, perhaps no one has attempted to resolve them with greater comprehensiveness than Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan, who last year celebrated his one hundredth birthday.

The traditional Jewish way of life and thought, old and gnarled by experience and travail, confronted on this continent a complex, novel challenge. America was not like any of the nations Jews had known, certainly not like the land of the Czars or even of the Kaisers. The problem was not only that America was modern, whereas most Jews had lived their years in premodern societies—although this indeed caused many a heartache and generated a great deal of anxiety. The problem was the face America presented to the newcomers. It was a good face.

To be sure, in this *goldene medineh* the immigrants did not find the streets paved with gold. But what they did find was a peculiar and unprecedented willingness to accept them as Americans, like everybody else. This came as a surprise—a pleasant surprise. There was to be no more "we" and "they"; no more separation between the people of Israel and the society around them; no more standing out as strangers in a host land, as an *imperium in imperio*; no more the temporary sojourners in someone else's territory. The Jews were not the guests, but among the hosts.

The Jews reacted to this surprise with almost painful enthusiasm. No one sang "land where our fathers died" more lustily than children whose fathers had died in Minsk or Vilna, having scarcely heard of Lincoln and Washington. And here, precisely, is where the problem arose. For the essence of Jewish identity is that the children of Israel are not and may not be "like the other nations." Every Saturday night, the ceremony of *havdala* (separation) is performed in traditional Jewish homes. In bidding farewell to the Sabbath, the pious affirm:

> Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, who separates between the profane and the holy, between the light and the darkness, between Israel and the nations. . . .

Down through the ages prophets and rabbis had warned against the sin of trying to be like the other nations. Now, in America, there was a prospect of Jews becoming not just like the other nations, but exactly the same. The prospect, in short, of assimilation.

Another problem facing the Jews arose from the relation of America to religious faith. On the one hand the United States had a pronounced disposition in favor of religion. The Constitution and the Declaration of Independence mentioned God the Creator. Towns and byways were dotted with churches. At the same time, however, the First Amendment sought to sever the organic relation between church and state. There was freedom to practice whatever faith one preferred. Religion was not to be established. Its proper place was private. Later, in the public school, the special "temple" of American life, its rituals and symbols were forbidden.

Yet the Jewish religion, like other traditional faiths, was anything but a private matter. "You shall speak of them when you sit in your house,

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when you walk in the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." This kind of total claim could not be easily satisfied in a society that discouraged public religiosity while encouraging private belief. Many dealt with the dilemma by abandoning traditional Judaism, or by leaving the fold altogether.

There were other difficulties as well. Although Judaism is of course a religion, and a high one, its essential character lies in the fact that it is embodied in the life of a people, an ethnos, an *am* (the Hebrew term is related to the Semitic root meaning family). This peculiar fact, that Judaism basically means allegiance to a particular "family," also means that one may be identifiably Jewish even though denying the basic tenets of the faith. What is important is not theological affirmations, but the sense of attachment. Philip Roth is acute on this point, too:

> What a Jewish child inherited was no body of learning and no language and finally no Lord . . . what one did receive was a psychology.

This is an exaggeration, but it points to a genuine quality of Jewishness: the emphasis on belongingness.

This peculiarity of Jewish life baffled many in America, including many Jews. In America, it was felt, the only people one ought to belong to was the American people. Belonging to another people could perhaps be accepted as something temporary, a syndrome of the immigrant generation, but it was a condition that would and should be shed with progressive Americanization.

It soon became clear that this was not so easily done, for dissolving the idea of peoplehood meant dissolving the essence of Judaism itself. Many nevertheless tried to do just that. The effort to shake off or to transcend the fact of Jewish peoplehood —through assimilation, through radical politics, through secularization in its many forms and guises —is part of the story of the Jewish encounter with a land that both welcomed Jews and tended to disparage Jewish separateness.

Finally, there was the immense complication that the separate people to which the Jew belonged was not just any people—it was the *chosen* people, the favorite people of God. Much as the traditional notion of chosenness was stretched and pulled, obfuscated and reinterpreted, in the end it remained a stark fact, stated in the prayers recited every day —"Thou hast chosen us from among the nations" —and vivid in the consciousness of most Jews. "I have yet to meet a Jew," the theologian Will Herberg once asserted, "who in some way did not feel that the Jews were chosen."

This assertion is a scandal to the modern egalitarian spirit. It is also an affront to what the sociologist J. M. Cuddihy has called the American religion of civility. After all, Judaism was not the only traditional faith that was asked to take its place within the new American order. "The situation is," writes Cuddihy (in *No Offense*), that "as each of the traditional European religions arrived in America and clambered up out of steerage it confronted an unprecedented pluralistic situation: the existence of other religions." The theoretical problem facing each of the European religions was how to continue administering a tradition with age-old monopolistic pretensions, while finding ways to legitimate the demonopolization that had taken place. According to what Cuddihy calls "Protestant etiquette," no one religion could claim to be the only path to salvation; the central command of the new religion of civility was, "Thou shalt not claim any superiority." This posed an "administrative" problem to all the European religions, but to Judaism the problem was acute: how to obey this command without commiting suicide?

Mordecai Kaplan tried to "reconstruct" Judaism in order to meet these various challenges. His efforts were not merely theoretical. Kaplan was born in Lithuania, the son of a talmudic scholar. In America he went to public schools and graduated from City College and then Columbia University (M.A., 1902). He served as a rabbi in prominent synagogues and taught at the Jewish Theological Seminary for most of his professional life.

This last fact was very important for the formation of Kaplan's thought. The Seminary, then as now, was the center of Conservative Judaism, a version of Jewish traditionalism which has as its program the maintenance of Jewish distinctiveness *with* an American style of life, the combining of "tradition and change." From the beginning Conservative Judaism refused to accept the total acculturation promoted by Reform Judaism, or the defiant separationism of Orthodoxy. It saw its task as one of preserving the tradition, but in the modern mode.

Kaplan, the founder of a variant stream within Conservative Judaism known as Reconstructionism, asserted that Jewishness was not strictly speaking a religion at all. This did not mean that it had nothing to do with the sacred. Kaplan promoted a new definition: "Judaism as a Civilization" (a phrase he used as the title of his most influential book, first published in 1934).

According to Kaplan, everyone belongs to some people, and every people creates a civilization consisting of language, art, feelings, history, music, etc. Every civilization also has a religion, which provides the underlying ideas of the people, the sanctification of the important events forming the character of the people, and the various rituals guaranteeing and celebrating the culture of the people. These Kaplan called *sancta*. But the heart of the religion, as Emile Durkheim had said, is the people and what it considers supremely important.

Thus, in Kaplan's conception Judaism was not

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a set of beliefs or a system of law. It was, rather, the evolving way of life of the Jewish people. (This, aside from a nuance or two, was not all that different from the main thrust of Conservative Judaism, which the sociologist Marshall Sklare once described as "ethnic solidarity perpetuated chiefly under religious auspices.")

For Kaplan, just as there was a Jewish civilization, so there was an American civilization, a whole pattern of events, individuals, documents, and ideas that formed the American soul. (Robert Bellah would later coin the term "civil religion" for this idea.) The American Jew therefore lived in two civilizations: the American and the Jewish. Kaplan frankly admitted the distinctiveness of these two modes of living, yet he saw in the differences a source not of potential conflict but of mutual enrichment. Jews should celebrate *both* Yom Kippur and Thanksgiving. This was the American way: live in two civilizations.

Kaplan rejected the metaphor of the "melting pot" to describe American life. He rather endorsed what Horace Kallen called "cultural pluralism," and he urged Jews to realize in their own lives the promise held by that idea. Within the Jewish community he instigated the creation of a new type of institution, the Jewish Center, which absorbed the synagogue and in addition offered many services people had hardly ever considered part of Judaism: basketball, health facilities, art shows, literary discussions.

A second thrust in Kaplan's reconstruction of Judaism was to provide a naturalistic base for Jewish thought. Kaplan insisted that in a Judaism fit for the modern world, there could be no miracles, no divine revelation. The mountain may have thundered, but the word that came forth was not that of a God existing outside the universe, but the real consciousness of the people assuming unto itself moral commands. God was to be understood —in Kaplan's famous definition—as the Power that makes for salvation, the sum of the forces within the universe which help man achieve his fulfillment, his self-realization, his salvation.

If Kaplan's second initiative may be seen as owing something to a line of thought going back to Spinoza, his third initiative was unprecedented. He openly and vigorously rejected the doctrine of the "chosen people." For one thing, it contradicted the idea of a naturalistic God, for such a God could no more choose anyone, or anything, than could the law of gravity or electricity. For another thing, the doctrine of chosenness was out of step with the circumstances in which American Jews now found themselves, and to which they had to adjust. In *The Future of the American Jew*, Kaplan wrote: "We must admit that we are calling for a drastic revision of traditional attitudes in the interest of democracy, peace, and good will." The idea of chosenness, he asserted, was objectionable from the viewpoint that all "who call upon Him in truth" are equally near to God. It was also against the American ideal, the democratic ethos, and the demands of civility and good taste.

Kaplan's bold insistence on this last point raised a storm in the Jewish community. Scarcely anyone, aside from Kaplan himself, was enthusiastic about excising from the prayerbook those references to chosenness which are so precious to Jewish consciousness. Yet he believed that Jews would not be accepted in the mainstream so long as they retained this article of faith. In this respect he remained the most explicit and the most insistent religious thinker to call for the modification of traditional Jewish doctrine in the interests of an ideal of social harmony.

KAPLAN'S triple strand of peoplehood, naturalism, and pluralism was suited to a generation that had become Americanized but that retained emotional ties to Jewishness (not necessarily Judaism). This generation felt comfortable living in a two-story house. The first story, America, was open to all and bore no distinctive Jewish characteristics. The second story was where one went for privacy, intimacy, and warmth.

But what can we say about all this today?

No one could have foretold the emergence throughout American society, even among liberals, of a strong trend toward ethnic self-assertion. As the novelist Anne Roiphe has put it, expressing her own surprise at having come to such a pass, "It is better to be tribal and ethnocentric than urbane and adrift." Americans of all kinds have discovered a need for "roots," for belonging to some specialized group or region within the generalized American whole.

In this respect, indeed, Jewishness has acquired a certain cachet—not because Jewish theology has suddenly found favor but rather because the Jewish emphasis on group, family, and tradition is believed to offer an emotional advantage in a cold world. The ethnocentric quality of Jewishness has not only been accepted, it has been elevated into a positive quality for Americans in general. Here Kaplan was decades ahead of his time.

In addition to the new ethnic self-assertion in America today, however, there is also a new religiosity, and it is one that forms an ironic counterpoint to genteel conceptions of the proper place of religious beliefs within the American public order. The new religiousness evident in America is not private, discreet, and polite. Today's believers lobby for legislation, march in parades, organize demonstrations. They have gone out of the sanctuary, where one speaks in whispers, and emerged on television and in the newspapers. They worry aloud about the federal budget, and about pornography: about America's relations with other nations, and about abortion. Their religious values are public, strident, demanding.

This brand of religiosity has been seen before in

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certain periods of our history. To many it may seem un-American, even unconstitutional. But to traditional Jews it looks familiar. To such Jews, religion has always been public, on the street, and in the halls of government. And even to non-traditional Jews, or to Jews who, although not observant themselves, like to think their strongly held political and moral values owe something to Jewish teachings, the public "thrust" of the new believers must seem a familiar mode of expressing one's beliefs about society. The new religiousness was born in the American heartland, but it has ties with a certain Jewish style in public life.

Kaplan was least successful in his theological sallies. This was especially true in the rejection of chosenness. After all, the basis of Christian faith is Jewish chosenness. Why should the Jews deny what others affirm? It seems absurd to reject what both Judaism and Christianity have taught from time immemorial: that something important was said at Mount Sinai to the Jews, and to the Jews alone. In a perverse and horrible way Hitler too confirmed the specialness of the Jews.

Most surprising is the contemporary fate of naturalism. Wherever there is religious fervor among American Jews today there is a thirst for transcendence, for mystery. There is a striving—sometimes pathetically gauche—to experience God. Even the Columbia University campus, where John Dewey taught, does not want Deweyan religion; it prefers the Baal Shem Tov. If young Jews cannot find God in Judaism they will look for Him in strange places. Kaplan taught a God Who is totally understood. It turns out that such a God is irrelevant. God is real and concrete only when He is beyond our grasp and understanding —when He is, in the words of Kaplan's Seminary colleague, the late Abraham J. Heschel, ineffable.

CONTEMPORARY Jews have embraced the quality of peoplehood in their self-understanding, but also have persisted in affirming their specialness, and many, surprisingly, reach out to a transcendent God. In this way they have confirmed several of the profound truths about Judaism and America articulated by Mordecai M. Kaplan. But they have also shown that this story, so full of unexpected twists and turns, is far from having reached its final form.

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Our "Most Important" Living Poet

Robert Richman

In 1976, the poet John Ashbery received the three most prestigious awards an American writer can have bestowed on him: the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the Pulitzer Prize. Similar validation has been expressed over the years by other authoritative voices. In 1956, Ashbery won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Award (a sanctioned head start, if there ever was one, for the American poetry sweepstakes). *Poetry*, the most venerable if not the most respected magazine of verse in America, has declared that "the chances are very good that John Ashbery will come to dominate the last third of the century as Yeats dominated the first," while Harold Bloom of Yale has remarked that "[Ashbery] and Elizabeth Bishop are our two living contemporaries who should be beyond all critical dispute," and Helen McNeil, a British critic writing in the *Times Literary Supplement*, has said that "since the death of Robert Lowell, the title of most important American poet has been on offer to John Ashbery." Countless other critics have registered similar judgments. And as if all that were not enough, the government of the United States commissioned Ashbery to write a poem for the bicentennial. Ashbery responded, with all due mockery, with "Pyrography."

Ashbery's work has been included in every anthology of contemporary poetry—even those whose editors, as one critic has noted, are "unable to comprehend his difficult poetry [but who] seem obliged to acknowledge it." Ashbery's famous "difficulty," indeed, has not seemed to pose an obstacle to his acclaim. This is partially due, no doubt, to the cachet difficult poems have had recently (the less one understands a poem, the better it must be), but mainly to his incredible perseverance: Ashbery's latest book, *Shadow Train*,* is his tenth in under twenty years. His seemingly immaculately planned career is, as he says in two telling lines from a poem in this book, "too perfect in its outrageous/Regularity to be called to stand trial again."

If Ashbery had ever been on trial in the past, it was because his method was not understood. Once one grasps that method—as well as its philosophical sources and influences—one understands how the poetry is generated (although not what it is about). As Ashbery himself once noted, rather than dealing specifically with problems, issues, or feelings, his method seeks to reproduce "the actions of a mind at work or rest." A typical Ashbery poem attempts to focus attention on its own content—formless, arbitrary, free-associational fragments—rather than on any ostensible subject matter or point. Ashbery once claimed that he rarely rewrites, for the poetry's craft and "meaning" are automatically "there" in the words first put down on paper. He also claims to begin often with a title, since "there are many ways of getting pushed into a poem and they're all valid." The lines of an Ashbery poem seem less the natural products of an emotion or idea than insertions, and the overall result is, as other commentators have noticed, similar to an abstract expressionist painting—fractured and indistinct. As Kenneth Koch remarks in a recent anthology of contemporary poetry, one feels that "somehow [one has] missed the point of an Ashbery poem. Usually there really isn't a point. . . ." "The power of the poetry," says Ashbery, "lies in its indirection, its oblique force."

An Ashbery poem is sometimes as discontinuous in its style as in its logic. Syntactical contortions, endless parenthetical remarks, and ellipses are typical—as if the linear requirements of grammar were too constricting for the poet's roller-coaster of associative thoughts. Often Ashbery abruptly changes tense or person; he finds it "very easy to move from one person in the sense of a pronoun to another [which] helps to produce a kind of polyphony in my poetry which I . . . feel is a means toward a greater naturalism." Ashbery likes to be interrupted in the act of composition—by the telephone, by an advertisement on the radio—so he can incorporate these extraneous snippets to vary the poem's music. Indeed, all of Ashbery's language seems taken from other sources, making the poems sound oddly rehearsed. Even symbols and literary allusions, when they are used, refer more to their secondhand nature than to any fresh poetic idea. Ashbery's typical tone is flat, nasal, un-

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enthused: the emotions, like the images, seem to be used or false—certainly of no great consequence to the poet himself.

In the early 1950's, after a period of intense depression and inactivity, Ashbery attended a concert of John Cage's *Music of Changes* with his friend and fellow poet, the late Frank O'Hara. Ashbery recalls: "It was a series of dissonant chords, mostly loud, with irregular rhythm. It went on for over an hour and seemed infinitely extendable. I felt profoundly refreshed after hearing that. I started to write again shortly afterwards. I felt that I could be as singular in my art as Cage was in his." This inspiration resulted in, to use the title of an Ashbery poem written a few years later, a "new realism," which, like Cage's music, rejects the laws of perspective, logic, and narration in favor of randomness and discontinuity.

The roots of this "new realism," however, were in the (then) thirty-year-old French artistic movement known as surrealism, which, under the auspices of the writers André Breton, Paul Eluard, and Guillaume Apollinaire, and the painters René Magritte, Giorgio de Chirico, and Salvador Dali, fostered outrageous blends in their art of the familiar and the improbable (one thinks of Magritte's castle in the air or his cup of coffee with a sugar cube that does not melt or sink). What particularly caught Ashbery's attention, however, was the surrealists' (especially de Chirico's) poeticization of the banal and subordination of the crafting or organizing sensibility. As Breton, the acknowledged leader of the movement, declared, true literary art should consist of "[a] monologue that flows as rapidly as possible on which the critical spirit of the subject brings no judgment to bear . . . and which will reproduce as exactly as possible spoken thought."

Toward such a goal each verbal unit (images as well as words) of "spoken thought" has equal value and, more importantly, has value in and of itself rather than in relation to other verbal units or to any overarching (read: oppressive) poetic idea. Hence no "correct" balance exists between the particular and the general, or between abstraction and detail, and the resulting disjunct verse contains no specific meaning, at least the kind one would expect. As David Shapiro writes in a recent book on Ashbery,* "If meaning is 'what anything suggests,' Ashbery often attempts paradoxically to present a blank configuration of words" that not only are interpretation-proof but offer a "labyrinth of possible denotations and possible lack of denotations."

WHAT, then, does this poetry concern itself with? The answer is: itself—its inconclusiveness, its antinomianism, its absurdism, and, above all, its deep distrust of language that naively attempts statements about reality and reality's possible meaning. Ashbery's poetry is, in a word, self-referential. Ashbery: "My poetry talks about itself. That is mainly what it does. To talk about it further is unnecessary and, for me, an ungenial gymnastic."

Bits of self-reflexiveness occur in Ashbery's first book, *Some Trees*, published originally in 1956. But essentially this book consists of, in the words of Shapiro, "parodies of narration" in which the cadence and look of typical narrative poetry are used in the service of poems which, if they are not meaningless altogether, at least attempt to undermine their "announced" subjects. For example, in the apparently autobiographical poem, "The Portrait of Little J.A. in a Prospect of Flowers," clarity of image and smooth linguistic simplicity reveal absolutely nothing substantial about the poet's childhood, which one vaguely senses was full of importance (particularly regarding his sexual development). Instead, Ashbery writes around his life, and then at the end of the poem comments on this process, capping it with a slice of jarringly false nostalgia:

> Still, as the loveliest feelings
>
> Must soon find words, and these, yes,
> Displace them, so I am not wrong
> In calling this comic version of
> myself
> The true one. For as change is
> horror,
> Virtue is really stubbornness
>
> And only in the light of lost
> words
> Can we imagine our rewards.

Poetic virtue, too, is stubbornness: Ashbery snubs the standard poetic contemplation of youth by ironically "rescuing" his past by means of extraneous images and a cool remove that scants the pain and urgency of childhood. The more traditional effect of reminiscence (such as forcing the poet to reevaluate his present life or reconcile it to the past) is replaced with the unexpected one of reevaluating the method of the poem itself. These lines supply a foretaste of Ashbery's later, more ambitious self-reflexive experiments (as do poems such as "A Boy" which contains the lines "It had been raining but/It had not been raining"—distinguishing linguistic reality from any other form reality might take).

"The Instruction Manual," one of Ashbery's more widely reprinted poems from *Some Trees*, illustrates, again through the use of a smoothly ironic narrative, how little inherent order or meaning exists in outward events. The poet imagines he sees, out of his office window, a street scene in Guadalajara consisting of a bandstand, flower

* *John Ashbery: An Introduction to the Poetry*, Columbia University Press, 190 pp., $12.95. Shapiro's book shows its partisanship by employing Ashbery's own methodology for writing literary criticism comprised of bits of nomadic commentary with no overriding argument—just like, as the author says of Ashbery's poetry, "a staircase leading to no floor."

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girls, boys, a man with a toothpick in his mouth, an old woman whose son is in Mexico City: a meaningless procession, except for the fact that each person or thing has been granted the right to be in the poem. Each item exists linguistically for its own sake, and is flattened to conform to Ashbery's world of equal verbal value.

Ashbery's quarrel with causality and referentiality takes a different form in his second book, *The Tennis Court Oath* (1963). Instead of modulated ironic narratives and false limpidity Ashbery resorts to the syntactically, grammatically, and metaphorically disjunct poetry of collage. The first lines of the long poem "Europe"—which the critic Richard Kostelanetz has called a "classic of coherent diffusiveness"—read as follows:

> To employ her
> construction ball
> Morning fed on the
> bright blue wood
> of the month
> cannot understand
> feels deeply)

Following the lead of the painter Robert Rauschenburg, Ashbery admits everything into "Europe": stray bits from newspapers, lopped-off phrases from children's books, bad poetry, and loose thoughts from the back of the poet's mind—all frosted over with an equalizing emotional deadness. Like the pieces of a painter's collage, the words refer to themselves and to the "idea" of collage. Entrance requirements for the poem are gratuitousness and error. Ashbery: "I really think that meaningfulness can't get along without randomness and that they somehow have to be brought together." About "Europe" Ashbery remarked, "I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I did know what I didn't want to do."

In his next two books, *Rivers and Mountains* (1967) and *The Double Dream of Spring* (1970), the title of which is taken from a painting by de Chirico, Ashbery moves back from opaque collage to the smooth ironic cadences of his early poems. But there is a wider range of feelings that are the butt of his irony. In "These Lacustrine Cities," for example, the poet touches on grave emotions and subjects, using them as points of departure for his own emotional flaccidity:

> These lacustrine cities grew out of
> loathing
> Into something forgetful, although
> angry with history.
> They are the product of an idea:
> that man is horrible, for in-
> stance,
> Though this is only one example.

Ashbery states the "idea" of man's horribleness as if it were the time of day, and then drops it without further ado. The phrase "only one example" illustrates the idea's trifling importance. Skewed emphases such as these, "frustrated denials" (as the poet says in "Song" from *Double Dream*), and radical depletion (What "loathing" did the cities grow out of? Which "forgetful" thing did they grow into? Why are they "angry with history"?) work with impeccable grammar and utter illogic to bring the poem, as Shapiro says, "to its solipsistic 'solution.'" How could it be otherwise?

In these volumes Ashbery still writes radically anti-causal verse. In a note to one group of poems in *Double Dream* the poet says that he wrote them first "in French and translated them myself into English, with the idea of avoiding customary word-patterns and associations." He also depends heavily on clichés, as in "Decoy," which uses a good number of the pseudo-political, or particularly banal industrial-newsletter, type:

> We hold these truths to be self-
> evident:
> That ostracism, both political and
> moral, has
> Its place in the twentieth-century
> scheme of things;
> That urban chaos is the problem we
> have been seeing into and seeing
> into,
> For the factory, deadpanned by its
> very existence into a
> Descending code of values, has
> moved right across the road from
> total financial upheaval
> And caught regression head-on. The
> descending scale does not imply
> A corresponding deterioration of
> moral values, punctuated
> By acts of corporate vandalism every
> five years. . . .
>
> There is every reason to rejoice
> with those self-styled prophets
> of commercial disaster, those
> harbingers of gloom. . . .

The entire poem, couched in such jargon, leads nowhere ("The denouement, that, advancing slowly, never arrives") and ends with another false conclusion:

> To sum up: We are fond of plotting
> itineraries
> And our pyramiding memories, alert
> as dandelion fuzz, dart from one
> pretext to the next. . . .

Ashbery's world of irony and parody continues full-steam in his next book, comically titled *Three Poems*, for the book actually consists of three long free-associational prose works ("I don't know what poetic means," says the poet)—"antinomian confessions" in the Christian tradition, as Shapiro points out, but, of course, contemporary ones of "discontinuity and revolt." The first parody of spiritual progress, called "The New Spirit," begins

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with a description of the poem's rather than the poet's progress:

> I thought that if I could put it all down, that would be one way. And next the thought came to me that to leave all out would be another, and truer, way.
>
> clean-washed sea
> The flowers were.
>
> These are examples of leaving out. But, forget as we will, something soon comes to stand in their place. Not the truth, perhaps, but—yourself. It is you who made this, therefore you are true. But the truth has passed on
>
> to divide all.

Ashbery's poetry of omission—which still contains, at least on the first page, warm gestures toward the free association ("next the thought . . .") and relativistic solipsism ("Not the truth, perhaps, but—yourself") of his earlier books—goes on, wittily, for fifty-one pages. Here the "borrowed" language parodies the pedantic and philosophic ruminations of Bunyan.

THIS most obscurely private of Ashbery's books was followed, in 1976, by his most accessible, the award-winning *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, which contains more reflexive "guides" to the poetry than any other collection. In fact, the title poem's statements of method intrude more and more as the poem proceeds—until they become the poem itself. Here is a sampling of its remarks about, among other things, its own verbal "flatness," anti-logical bias, condescension to "old" subjects, and the poet's refusal to reveal anything below the surface of the poem:

> But your eyes proclaim
> That everything is surface. The surface is what's there
> And nothing can exist except what's there.
> * * *
> I see in this only the chaos
> Of your round mirror which organizes everything
> Around the polestar of your eyes which are empty,
> Know nothing, dream but reveal nothing.
> * * *
> desk, papers, books
> Photographs of friends, the window and the trees
> Merging in one neutral band. . . .
> And I cannot explain the action of leveling,
> Why it should all boil down to one
> Uniform substance.
> * * *
> *This* thing, this mute, undivided present,
> Has the justification of logic, which
> In this instance isn't a bad thing,
> Or wouldn't be, if the way of telling
> Didn't somehow intrude, twisting the end result
> Into a caricature of itself.

And, from a poem called "The Only Thing That Can Save America":

> I know that I braid too much my own
> Snapped-off perceptions of things as they come to me.
> They are private and always will be. . . .
> The quirky things that happen to me, and I tell you,
> And you instantly know what I mean?
> What remote orchard by winding roads
> Hides them? Where are these roots?

In a rare moment in *Self-Portrait* Ashbery deals expressly with an issue: his inability, as a poet, to have a "traditional" transcendent experience, and the result is probably the best thing in the book. The last part of "As I came from the Holy Land" reads:

> remember you are free to wander away
> as from other times other scenes that were taking place
> the history of someone who came too late
> the time is right now and the adage
> is hatching as the seasons change and tremble
> it is finally as though that thing of monstrous interest
> were happening in the sky
> but the sun is setting and prevents you from seeing it.

This poem, the title of which is taken from Sir Walter Raleigh's haunting poem about the durability of the *idea* of love, as opposed to its earthly variation, poignantly expresses the poet's "lateness" in history in the same way "Answering a Question in the Mountains" in *Some Trees* does ("It is late to be late."). But here Ashbery dispenses with irony, parody, and the usual drabness of feeling. For once, the poem's rhythm is synchronized to its emotional level. It seems as if the proximity of the transcendent experience inspired Ashbery to share his vision rather than preempt it for a discourse on method.

In *Houseboat Days* (1977), however, Ashbery returns to writing poems that profess their own nonproductivity:

> And no matter how it all disappeared,
> Or where it was going, it is no longer
> Material for a poem. Its subject
> Matters too much, and not enough, standing there helplessly
> While the poem streaked by, its tail afire, a bad
> Comet screaming hate and disaster, but so turned inward

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That the meaning, good or other,
can never
Become known.

("Syringa")

In "Litany," from *As We Know* (1979), Ashbery goes back to his disjunct style, this time in the form of a two-columned poem designed to be read simultaneously and aloud, creating a disharmonious jangle. The poem's two private voices perhaps most aggressively indicate Ashbery's belief in the insurmountable separateness of two minds. The rest of *As We Know* resembles *Houseboat Days* (the latter is perhaps slightly more inspired) except for a group of poems the titles of which are longer than the actual poems; parodies, it would seem, of the worst of Richard Brautigan (for what reason, one can only guess).

Shadow Train, Ashbery's new book, parodies the national mood of retrenchment and specifically the new conservatism of form and representation in the arts (notably painting) with a tidy package of fifty poems of identical length (sixteen lines) and structure (four stanzas). But beneath the surface the poet is up to the same old tricks—only worse. This bit of meaninglessness Ashbery calls, not without irony, "Another Chain Letter":

He had had it told to him on the
sward
Where the fat men bowl, and told so
that no one—
He least of all—might be sure in
the days to come
Of the exact terms. Then, each
turned back

To his business, as is customary on
such occasions.
Months and months went by. The
green squirearchy
Of the dandelions was falling
through the hoop again
And no one, it seemed, had had the
presence of mind

To initiate proceedings or stop
the wheel
From the number it was backing away
from as it stopped:
It was performing prettily; the
puncture stayed unseen;
The wilderness seemed to like the
eclogue about it

You wrote and performed, but really
no one now
Saw any good in the cause, or any
guilt. It was a conspiracy
Of right-handed notions. Which is
how we all
Became partners in the pastoral doffing,
the night we now knew.

The poem geometrically progresses away from its subject (which is itself too evanescent to be stated with any certainty) and by the third stanza has begun talking about its own decentering process. The long sentences that reflect this process inevitably spawn new "subjects" from which the poem must again tailspin. The six "it"s (four in the third stanza) are the linguistic waste-matter produced by this ironical game between the poet and his poem, which again has taken on a life of its own—rather like a dog with a talent for tricks. And the waste-matter, as in the previous Ashbery poems, becomes the poem itself. This unstoppable (the beginnings and endings are artificial), subjectless poem manages to tell the reader one thing, however: how little one can learn from it. The last line points up the poem's revelation of confusion and darkness ("night").

The poet's concern with the autonomy of language takes on an especially jejune cast in *Shadow Train*. The first stanza of "Paradoxes and Oxymorons," for example, reads:

This poem is concerned with language
on a very plain level.
Look at it talking to you. You
look out a window
Or pretend to fidget. You have it
but you don't have it.
You miss it, it misses you. You
miss each other.

After its autonomous identity is established, the poem becomes a willful, animate creature and finally becomes the reader:

. . . And the poem
Has set me softly down beside you.
The poem is you.

Ashbery juxtaposes styles in his usual manner ("So long before rosy-fingered dawn began to mess around/With the horizon. . . .") and, though there are some suggestive phrases about the separateness of individual sensibilities (which we are told to "revel" in), as well as the pointlessness of thought and the insurmountable boredom of life and art, there are far fewer "guides" to the poetry than in previous volumes. On the whole the book casts a bleak, if sometimes comic, shadow—more diffuse than usual (one is less sure in this book *why* the poet is so obscurely despairing), but then, Ashbery never promised things would get better, or, for that matter, clearer.

IF THE foregoing successfully describes the curious and unique nature of John Ashbery's poetry, it would certainly seem a non sequitur to say that his work is Romantic, in the line of Keats, Wordsworth, and Tennyson. Yet Helen Vendler, in a long piece on Ashbery that appeared in the *New Yorker* (March 16, 1981), says just that. Miss Vendler, who has written very well on such poets as Robert Lowell, Wallace Stevens, Charles Wright, and others, has Ashbery's own authority for the designation: in an interview in the *New York Quarterly* Ashbery refers to himself

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as a "Romantic." Yet since nearly everything else he says in that interview opposes the principles of Romantic poetry, one cannot help regarding his remark as yet another nugget of irony or as a reference to his spirited personal nature. Be that as it may, Miss Vendler takes her argument very seriously.

She begins by declaring her intention of describing what Ashbery's poems are "about." "It is popularly believed, with some reason," she says, "that . . . it is impossible to say what an Ashbery poem is 'about.'" "An alternative view," she writes, "says that every Ashbery poem is about poetry. . . . Though this may in part be true, it sounds thin in the telling." She dismisses Ashbery's own claim of the surrealist influence on his poetry by stating that "surrealism cannot be parsed into sense, and Ashbery can—a process one finds laborious at first, but then increasingly natural, as one gets the hang of it (if my own experience is typical)." Still, even Miss Vendler has to concede that the poet's "deep trust in his own associative processes makes for cases of inaccessibility."

Miss Vendler then quotes Keats at length (from the letters) on the poet's conception of the world as a vale of soul-making: how a "Soul or Intelligence destined to possess the sense of Identity is achieved." She remarks that Ashbery's own poems of "soul-making and speculative classification . . . have been in the ascendant since *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror,*" the book in which "Ashbery gave his own version of the Keatsian soul-making." She thinks that "Ashbery, like Coleridge . . . [finds] all life an interruption of what was going on in his mind" and observes that Ashbery's "endless beginnings and endings . . . the changes of scenery, the shifting of characters, ally him to our most volatile poets—the Shakespeare of the sonnets, the Herbert of 'The Temple,' the Keats of the letters, the Shelley of 'Epipsychidion.'" "The distinct remove of his subject matter from immediate 'experience' also concerns Ashbery," she says; "Keats called it a state of 'dim dreams,' full of 'stirring shades, and baffled beams.'" "In Ashbery we find above all, what Wordsworth called

> . . . those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,
> Fallings from us, vanishings,
> Blank misgivings of a Creature
> Moving about in worlds not realized. . . ."

"In short," says Miss Vendler, "he comes from Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson, Stevens, Eliot; his poems are about love, or time, or age."

WHAT can be said for this view? One thing that Ashbery's free-associational technique and surrealism allow, as we have seen, is freedom of form and content. The fact that anything gains admittance to the poem, as well as the fact that Ashbery's linguistic resources are quite deep, will make for a wide range of words that *could* be construed to be "about" love, time, or age. (It should be pointed out in passing that in this essay, as in Miss Vendler's, only Ashbery's understandable lines have been quoted; at least 80 percent of the total are not readily graspable at all.) But does an obscure or unintegrated utterance amid self-reflexive ruminations and misleading metaphors—"yellow flowers," or "bed"—mean the poem is a love poem? ("Fragment" in *Double Dream* contains those words and was referred to once by Ashbery as a love poem.) "Branching around [the] ax[es] of loss, forgetfulness, or remorse" (Vendler) does not produce a poem that actually deals with these themes, especially if the poet is bent on destroying or distorting the subject once it has been announced, or on sabotaging it with irony, parody, or, as David Shapiro says, an "affectless pose and poise [that] lance any arousal of emotion."

The Romantics' obsessive investigation of their political, moral, and imaginative relation to the external world is profoundly opposed to Ashbery's self-reflexive tap dance. Ashbery's "contradictoriness"—another supposed likeness to the Romantics—is not couched, as it is for them, in dialectic. The Romantic poets bartered with the world; Ashbery, with himself. Whether it is the early automatism or the later poems constructed from slogans, TV news, and doggerel, there is no imaginative interaction with the sensual world—not even any moments of illumination; his banal objects remain brutally dull. (This in particular distinguishes him from that other Romantic, Wallace Stevens, who relentlessly sought to endow his poetic objects with grandeur and sublimity.)

The single point that connects Ashbery with the Romantics is his attempted creation of a "new world." Yet would Wordsworth or even Stevens approve of something so disharmonious, denigrating, without energy, lacking transcendental effect, and, to most readers, utterly incomprehensible? "The poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions," wrote Wordsworth in the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads.* "How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly?"

Ashbery's quick cutting from one thought to another is, according to Miss Vendler, part of a "consoling aesthetic, since by its standards every utterance is privileged as a nonce affair; it is also mournful, since it considers art as fleeting as life." This rather somber consideration does not take into account the unconsoling thought, suggested by Ashbery's poetry, that nothing could (or presumably should) be looked into at all ("The surface is what's there/And nothing can exist except what's there."). Ashbery himself has admitted that at times he does not know where he is going in a poem, and lacks a subject—how is this to be reconciled with Miss Vendler's assertion that Ash-

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bery has "borrowed from Stevens the trick of working up obliquely to his subject, so that the subject itself makes a rather late appearance in the poem"? Miss Vendler's own generous "deep trust" of Ashbery's associative processes—necessary in a critic—is hardly paid back in kind.

In a bold attempt to vindicate Ashbery's emotional coldness, Miss Vendler writes: "Oddly enough, our first response to emotional pain all around us, down in the cisterns, up in the gutters, is to deny we are feeling it." If this startling remark were true of our poets, their art would soon die for lack of blood. Fortunately, this is in general not the case. It is too true, however, that one vainly searches in Ashbery's poetry for some verbal correlative to the pain of loss, disillusion, unrequited love, or, on the positive side, to the warmth of friendship (about which Keats loved to discourse in his letters). Instead, one finds the isolation of self-reflexivity, "eyes . . . that reveal nothing" ("Self-Portrait"), and, as Shapiro says, "self-consuming text[s]" that are "nothing if not suicidal."

Miss Vendler finds Ashbery's poetry hopeful—"perennially hopeful [and] perennially generous, especially about the whole enterprise of art." Yet the more one of his poems says, the more embarrassed and the *less* hopeful it becomes. Also, the more knowledge it imparts, the less it succeeds; the more it displays the poet's learning, the less it educates; and the more the poetry resembles the voice of a living, breathing man, the less it is "itself." One would think that, if anything, Ashbery's poetry of non-production—involving endless linguistic copulation with no creation—threatens to destroy the enterprise of art altogether. Like the surrealists, who frightened even Sartre for this reason, Ashbery's radicalism is purely negative. Self-referentiality breaks down the vital link between the object and the world; the idea that the mind is a conduit breaks down the attachment between the object and thought. Artaud could have been referring to Ashbery when he said that the "surrealist despairs of attaining his own mind," for Ashbery replaces mind —represented in poetry by a strong and stable "I"— with a theory or code.

One might say this is, to one degree or another, true of all poets. With Ashbery, however, a serious claim has been entered that the importance lies entirely in the theory and not in what rises out of it. "It is as though poetry were incompetent to see its own image until reflected in the discursive language of criticism," says Miss Vendler. "And it may be so." Shapiro agrees: "The best poetry of our day is . . . a form of literary criticism." Such gross absurdities could only be uttered in an age that has little use for poets.

The "dark idolatry of the self" which Shelley feared has become a reality in contemporary art, and its poetic avatar of the moment is John Ashbery. His impressive linguistic inventiveness, and his unique voice, have been placed in the service of what Shapiro honestly calls an "icy, autocratic humiliation of the reader." Only a critic still anxious, as Helen Vendler is, to *will* some connection between poetry and human life and the human world could write of Ashbery that he "makes us feel more and more a part of a human collectivity," when the truth is more nearly the opposite. But as a young woman poet said to me when *Shadow Train* appeared: "It's like Marxism. You lie often enough and people will believe you."

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After Diaghilev

Sophie Glazer

"*Étonne-moi*!" Diaghilev demanded. "Astonish me!" Jean Cocteau obliged—and so did Sergei Prokofiev and Igor Stravinsky, Erik Satie, Pablo Picasso, Léon Bakst, Georges Braque, and a host of others. For twenty years, until his death in 1929, Diaghilev brought avant-garde artists to the world of ballet, bullying and cajoling them into his temperamental little company. Under his direction the first balletic experiments in cubism and surrealism were conducted. He transformed ballet throughout Europe from an opera adjunct to an art form, from a girly show to the cutting edge of experimentation. When *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* premiered in Paris in 1912, the critical furor confirmed just how far ballet had moved beyond mere entertainment. The first performance of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* in 1913 aroused an audience demonstration so violent that the dancers feared for their safety (though the music, even more than Nijinsky's choreography, was responsible for the reaction).

Diaghilev's enthusiastic if undiscriminating commitment to all that was avant-garde gave his group an impetus that survived his death. In this country and abroad Diaghilev dancers founded companies, staged ballets, trained young pupils to become dancers in the Ballets Russes tradition. George Balanchine, in the true Diaghilev style, tried everything from Broadway musicals to performing elephants until he created, in the New York City Ballet, a blend of classicism and modernism.

Somewhere along the way, however, the glitter and the glamor died. Today's choreographers and impresarios are no longer as young, hungry, and daring as their predecessors in the 20's; the audience for ballet, though larger than ever, no longer comes to the theater expecting to encounter experimental art; and the impetuous enthusiasts who once leaped to the defense of the beleaguered artists have left the battlefield (where in any case no battles are raging). The few daring experiments left over from the 60's already look outdated in the 80's. Arthur Mitchell, militant creator of the Dance Theater of Harlem, has quietly started accepting white dancers in his formerly all-black company; his own ballets have slipped off programs, to be replaced by excerpts from *Swan Lake*, and the *Corsaire* pas de deux. Mikhail Baryshnikov keeps restaging old favorites for the American Ballet Theater, and even the New York City Ballet, the bastion of the austere, "pure dance" ballet, has moved from Stravinsky to Tchaikowsky. The harsh modernism of Peter Martins's *Calcium Light Night* has given way to the period ballet, *The Magic Flute*.

As for the critics and the press, the furious debates that once raged in the pages of *Figaro* have been replaced by a new set of burning issues, which have little to do with dance itself. Instead we read "Has the Time Come Again to 'Save' Ballet?" (New York *Times*, January 17, 1982); "Will the Pennsylvania Ballet Survive?" (*Times*, February 7, 1982); "The Danger of Trying to Equate Ballet With Business" (*Times*, March 14, 1982). Dancers and administrators alike bring their passion to the bargaining table rather than the stage. Equally unmistakable is the move from performing dance to writing about it, from doing to talking. Once the disdained province of enthusiastic amateurs and self-styled balletomanes, writing about dance has become the arena of all that is exciting (and excited) in ballet. The language of the body has been shelved for the lure of the typewriter.

Books on dance proliferate. Among the more ambitious recent titles is Walter Sorell's *Dance in Its Time*,* a massive, full-scale history of the social, political, religious, and cultural context surrounding the rise and decline of dance. The index of this book runs from the Abbey Theater to the Ziegfeld Follies, with stops along the way for Descartes, Palladio, Petrarch, Galileo, Michelangelo, John Donne, and Charles Le Brun, director of the Gobelin tapestry factory. Sorell's indiscriminate inclusiveness is at once the strength and weakness of his enthusiastic survey. He traces dance from medieval mystery plays to *commedia dell'arte*; he writes in loving detail about the great masques and spectacles of the Renaissance; he sweeps briskly through the Cartesian method, the quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, mannerism, and French neoclassicism. Shaker and hasidic pietism share a chapter with Increase Mather's tract against dancing.

From the dizzying profusion of styles and events Sorell's opinions emerge very firmly: his admiration is reserved above all else for the quality of expressiveness. For him, progress is represented by the triumph of expressiveness over mere technique. Not surprisingly, Sorell hits his stride with the dawn of Romanticism and the phenomenal popularity of the waltz. Discussing the political, social, and moral issues reflected in the craze for the

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new dance, he fuses the disparate elements of art and politics into real social history. With his discussion of the waltzing motif in Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* Sorell convincingly demonstrates how, for a bourgeois reader, dance could contain and give form to the otherwise antagonistic emotions of attachment, harmony, disharmony, and violence as they arise against the backdrop of an ordered society.

It is in the Romantic era, Sorell suggests, that dance achieved its greatest success as an expression of the times. The quintessential Romantic ballet, Gautier's *Giselle* (1841), is an exploration of the painful gaps between desire and reality, or perhaps more accurately between the pleasure of desire and the disillusion of attainment. With typical Romantic dualism the ballet separates into two acts, thematically opposed. The first describes the adventures of young Count Albrecht who disguises himself as a peasant in order to win the heart of Giselle, a village beauty. Their idyll is cut short when his high-born fiancée arrives and reveals his duplicity. Giselle goes mad from grief and dies.

Is Albrecht a cad or an idealist, a victim or a manipulator of social norms? This satisfyingly Romantic question is answered in Act Two, a so-called *ballet blanc.* Visiting Giselle's grave by moonlight, the remorseful Albrecht is set upon by the Wilis, ghosts of maidens who have died betrayed. Giselle, transformed from peasant lass into ethereal spirit, attempts to save him from the Wilis' vengeance; when dawn comes the apparitions vanish and Albrecht is still alive. Thus does the sinful but unconsummated love of Act One lead to the pure passion of grief and expiation in Act Two. The entire ballet follows the dreamlike logic of a Romantic fantasy: Keats's "The Eve of St. Agnes" or a De Quincey dream vision. The major mechanics are disguise and revelation, and the significant events are entirely internal—deception, self-deception, guilt, and atonement.

With the death of Gautier and the birth of Diaghilev in 1872, the era of Parisian initiative, and of expressiveness, began to wane. The cancan came to Montmartre. The key words in art were science and nature. Loie Fuller dedicated her "Radium Dance" to Marie Curie. Electric lights and other enticing modern stage effects moved the focus from expressiveness to sensational contrivances. Dalcroze's eurhythmics—an attempt to find the essential harmony of music and movement through rhythm—brought a mechanistic, detached approach to the study of dance, while Isadora Duncan, attacking traditional technique from the other end, championed the cause of spontaneity and self-realization at the expense of training. Dolefully heading his final chapter "On the Cultural Crisis of Our Time," Sorell notes the first experiments in atonal music and plunges into the tale of the Ballets Russes.

Here Sorell gets carried away by the proliferation of trends in dance and the overwhelming rejection of Romanticism. Thus, to convey the merging of diverse aesthetic concepts in modern dance, Sorell has Diaghilev taking the entire Ballets Russes to Dalcroze eurhythmics classes, and hiring Marie Rambert to train the company in this technique, the better to deal with the complexities of Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps.*

The picture is tempting but too neat. Bronislava Nijinska, in her recently published *Early Memoirs,** has more convincingly documented the company's contempt for the eurhythmics fad, remarking that the project to initiate the company in the technique was abandoned after the dancers boycotted the classes. Claude Debussy dismissed Nijinsky's ballet *Jeux* by calling it "Dalcrozian," adding, "I hold M. Dalcroze to be one of the worst enemies of music."

Sorell's attempt to make a unified whole of the Denishawn dancers, T.S. Eliot's poetry, and Sacco and Vanzetti is a more striking example of his reckless appetite for inclusive generalizations. He writes of the 1920's, "The eternal prejudice of humanity was seasoned by the giddy mentality of a new cashocracy rushing toward an earthshaking stock-market crash." These efforts at encompassing statements, besides being untrue in themselves, are of dubious relevance to the small, enclosed world of dance. The bridge between the theater and the stock-market is built of more sinuous threads than these.

On a narrower subject, dance on film, Sorell has more cogent things to say. "The viewers . . . no longer see the dancer, they see the camera seeing the dancer . . . it becomes a secondhand event. . . . Reality is rebuilt, reorganized." Without doubt, choreography has not entirely caught up with the new technique. Choreographers depend heavily on videotape to preserve dances that have gone out of repertory, or to protect copyrights, but it is comparatively rare for a choreographer to work effectively with the camera, thinking in terms not of its limits but of its advantages. Dance on television is all too often a secondhand event, ballet designed for the stage and reconceived for the camera with only minimal adjustments. There are, of course, exceptions: Twyla Tharp, in *Making Television Dance,* worked imaginatively with videotape, demonstrating the unique possibilities of the television screen, and Martha Graham's *Clytemnestra* is extraordinarily powerful on tape. Modern dance may "work" better on the small screen than does ballet. It is intimate, relies usually on small casts, and often derives much of its significance from subtle gestures and expressions.

Sorell rather thoughtlessly condemns the mass media as a self-devouring hydra, "seducing and violating" the dance with the promise of financial reward. In fact, for many small companies across the country television offers the only hope for survival. Just as the legitimate theater is underwritten by television and movies, so dancers can subsidize a losing season of live performance with the fees from a television performance. One episode of *Dance in America* can bring to a small company touring en-

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gagements and a hope of surviving for two or three more seasons.

And so we come to the financially and artistically depressed present. The glorious days of court performances are long gone, and the private bounty that kept the Ballets Russes alive has evaporated. For a time the federal government and the various state arts councils were dispensing large sums, but in the current period of retrenchment these sources can no longer fill the gap between ticket prices and performance costs.

Yet even during the days of the most generous national funding, risky experimentation rarely competed successfully with the proven audience-pleasers like *The Nutcracker* at Christmas and excerpts from *Don Quixote*. The condition of American dance more and more resembles the stagnant state of affairs before Diaghilev. As in the days of the Imperial Theater, a few large companies remount crowd-pleasers for an affluent audience (now vastly increased) while independent dancers and companies live from performance to performance, always on the edge of bankruptcy.

IN THIS context, Bronislava Nijinska's memoirs of the early years of the Ballets Russes, mentioned above, are most instructive.

During the first decade of the 20th century, Bronislava Nijinska and her brother Vaslav lived as resident students in the Imperial School on Theater Street in St. Petersburg, totally shielded from the events of the outside world. In the self-absorbed life of the dance studios, Nijinska and her fellow students were virtually oblivious to the Russo-Japanese war and the 1905 revolution. Railroad strikes, the hoarding of food, and all the other indications of profound social disorder only came to the students' awareness when thinning audiences forced the private theaters to close.

The Nijinskys, Polish immigrants in Russia, were theoretically subject to all sorts of suspicion of revolutionary activity, but the young dancers considered themselves completely Russified and disregarded the potential danger. For Nijinska, the truly revolutionary event of this period was Vaslav's 1906 performance in the Blue Bird pas de deux from *Sleeping Beauty*. This role, conventionally a pure classical solo, had traditionally been performed with a pair of stiff wings attached to the heavy court-dress that comprised the costume. The eighteen-year-old Nijinsky for the first time reconceived the role as the *flight* of a bird; wearing a simple, light-weight costume that permitted him to flutter his arms and feet like beating wings, he used his extraordinary elevation to suggest soaring flight. This naturalistic interpretation of a part previously known solely as a conventional gymnastic exercise represented, for Nijinska, a revolutionary breakthrough far more significant than the riots then taking place on the Nevsky Prospect.

The harsh and demanding life of a dancer in the Imperial Theater, with its backbiting and infighting, proved wearisome to the Nijinskys. Diaghilev's offers of real parts in fascinating new ballets easily outweighed the allure of small roles in outdated star vehicles offered by the Imperial Theater; disregarding the pleas of their dancer-mother, brother and sister joined the Ballets Russes.

NIJINSKA'S description of the 1909 Ballets Russes season celebrates the camaraderie of a group of young dancers who for the first time found themselves performing outside the protection of the august Imperial Theater. The response of the audience could not be prearranged—the Imperial had claques to guarantee applause for its performances—and there was no room for politicking and maneuvering for parts within the company. "We all tried to help each other, pointing out mistakes as we noticed them, and together finding ways to correct them. . . ."

For the Russian dancers this sense of camaraderie intensified as the group met hostile or skeptical audiences in one European capital after another. Outside of St. Petersburg and Moscow, Russian ballet was as poorly regarded as were other Russian arts. It was Diaghilev, Benois, Bakst, Fokine, Stravinsky, and Nijinsky who met this skepticism head-on by creating a legitimately Russian ballet.

Petrouchka, still in the repertory today, was one of the first and most successful collaborations by Stravinsky, Fokine, and Benois. Nijinska's absorbing analysis of that ballet stresses her own efforts to capture the purely Russian character of the work (she, the half-assimilated Polish immigrant). The mise-en-scène is that of a Russian town on a Fair Day, with a puppeteer, street dancers, tambourine players, and other entertainments for a rowdy crowd. Nijinska sternly instructed the Parisian walk-ons to rearrange their elegant headdresses and scarves to resemble more closely the dowdy kerchiefs of peasants on holiday. Her own role was that of a puppet called the Ballerina Doll. Tamara Karsavina, the first to dance the role, had conceived it as a dainty French porcelain figure, and performed it with ballerina elegance. By contrast, Nijinska imagined the doll as a hand-crafted puppet, a plebeian toy with hands like wooden paddles, legs sewn to the body, moving only at the joints with an expressionless face and wide-open, unblinking eyes.

The rejection of elegance for realism became the hallmark of the new company. The dancers repudiated the Russian imperial tradition in which performers were required only to "keep a line straight or a circle round: preserve the groupings: execute the basic *pas* [steps]," and in which applause was reserved for the highest jumps, or the greatest number of pirouettes, interpolated into the part by the star.

One of Diaghilev's major innovations was to return control of the ballet to the choreographer. In the Ballets Russes every detail, from scenery and costume to makeup and hairstyle, was designed very strictly, as much a part of the ballet as the steps or the music, and no detail could be altered without the consent of the designer. Whereas in the Imperial Theater the ballerinas ignored the style of a particular work and altered steps to suit their own taste, Diaghilev's brilliantly designed and meticulously choreographed ballets focused the per-

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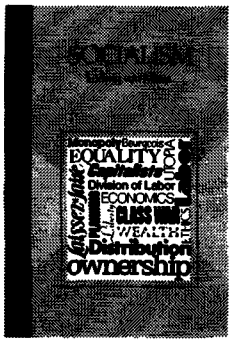

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former's attention on the role itself, and hence on the most faithful way of expressing it. The true dancer, Nijinska argues, studies a role to learn the composer's and choreographer's intention, and thus incorporates it into her consciousness; within those limits she imbues the part with her own deeply personal interpretation of it.

THIS issue continues to vex dancers and choreographers to the present day. American dancers, universally acknowledged to possess extraordinary techniques, have just as universally abandoned any effort at dancing their roles with any personal awareness of character. In international competitions, young American dancers are criticized for the monotone style with which they dance their pas de deux: the lyrical *Swan Lake,* the fiery *Don Quixote,* and the bravura *Corsaire* all look alike. The dancers are brilliantly accomplished technically, and easily achieve feats of gymnastic complexity. But neither the Romantic expressivism admired by Sorell nor the personal consciousness of role required by Nijinska is much in evidence. And meanwhile there is a dearth of appropriate choreography.

Technique improves and audiences grow; but there is a creative malaise in American dance. Over the last couple of decades, enormous quantities of federal money have stimulated ballet companies to develop ever more ambitious budgets and programs. Little semi-professional groups of students and housewives have joined the National Association of Regional Ballet in record numbers. Students have been taught the correct positions of feet, arms, and head, and have moved directly into performance at an early age. Sadly, the results on the whole have been mediocre and unimaginative.

The inevitable backlash is already here, as both public and private financing has started to drop. Where is Diaghilev now that we need him? Probably completing his MBA in fund-raising and direct-mail marketing; that is where the creative heart of ballet today still beats.

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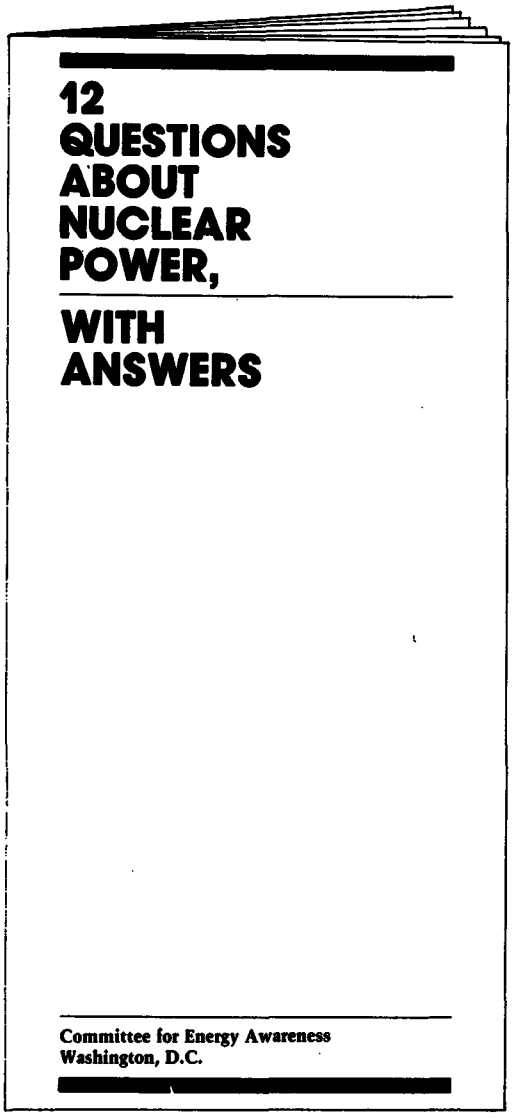

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Books in Review

A Theology of Capitalism

THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRATIC CAPITALISM. By MICHAEL NOVAK. *Simon & Schuster. 443 pp. $17.50.*

Reviewed by SAMUEL MCCRACKEN

INTELLECTUALS sometimes take considerable time to catch up with the facts. In 1543 Copernicus published his major work on the heliocentric theory; during the next century this theory received confirmations from Galileo and Newton. Yet throughout most of the 18th century, the Cassini family, directors of the observatory at Paris, remained piously geocentric. It can be said in explanation of the Cassinis' remarkable slowness to recognize the facts that not only could one write satisfactory almanacs and navigate accurately under the Ptolemaic conception of the universe, but that it was possible under its assumptions to do distinguished work in astronomy, as the Cassinis did and as Tycho Brahe had done before them. So acute a reasoner as Sherlock Holmes found no objection to the Ptolemaic theory, even after Dr. Watson informed him that it had competition. Holmes tartly replied that he could not imagine that the question was of any practical importance. That is, for a great many purposes, including most of those important to society, the Ptolemaic theory *worked*. It is not surprising that for some people it should have survived its intellectual demolition for a century or more.

It is not so easy to exculpate those who still hold to the superstitions of socialism. Whatever can be said of the status of Marxist theory, the failure—utter, consistent, and continuing—of Marxist practice is apparent to anyone with eyes to see. The most recent example comes from Poland, where four decades after the liberation of the workers from capitalist oppression and the end of their exploitation by the bosses, the workers are worse off than their comrades in even the least developed capitalist states. And yet many intellectuals—one is tempted to say most intellectuals (excluding, of course, those in socialist countries, where probably no one believes in socialism except as a means of maintaining ruling-class privileges)—continue to think socialism a form of economic organization superior to any other. This is a faith in the rightness of the old order as wrong-headedly pious as that of the Cassinis, but not nearly so harmless.

It has not been clear why socialism should be so esteemed despite its failure and—the inevitable corollary—capitalism so despised despite its success; most observers who have found the situation troubling enough to warrant attention have confined themselves to vague speculations about the contrariness of intellectuals. Now, Michael Novak has made some progress in clearing this matter up for us, but this is only a fringe benefit of his remarkable book. For *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* is perhaps the first serious attempt to construct a theology of capitalism. That this very phrase rings a little strange in the ears even of sympathetic hearers testifies to the compromised reputation of democratic capitalism even among many of its friends.

Yet no one would be surprised to hear of a theology of socialism, for such things are three-a-penny. Systematic attempts to show Communism to be an embodiment of Christianity have stretched out over this century, especially since the rise in Latin America of the "liberation theologians" of the Roman Catholic Church. And even before World War II, the Reverend Dr. Hewlett Johnson, the "Red Dean" of Canterbury, an Anglican cleric whose orthodoxy would probably have allowed him to sign with a clear conscience at least three dozen of the Thirty-Nine Articles, found an ideal Christian for his time in Joseph Stalin.

Novak rehabilitates the moral stature of democratic capitalism by showing how little it resembles the caricatures of it which pass almost everywhere as analytic descriptions. He uses the cooperative institution of the corporation to show that the spirit of democratic capitalism is far from the anarchic individualism that has attracted criticism from several directions, and refutes the common claim that the capitalist states comprise a center that exploits a dependent periphery.

Much of Novak's evidence for this position is based upon a comparison of North America and Latin America. As he points out, the economic positions of the two hemispheres were roughly similar during their struggles for independence in the last quarter of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th. Indeed, the riches of the Southern Hemisphere had originally been regarded as greater. The dream of the easy money available in the Seven Cities of Cibola animated much of the Spanish movement to the New World, but no one went to New England looking for gold. The nearest approach to Eldorado in the north were rich fisheries exploitable only by hard work and at great risk.

The orthodox explanation for the fact that North America is now rich and Latin America poor, enshrined in Marxist and liberal analysis alike, as well as in liberation theology, is that North America waxed fat by exploiting Latin America. Following the work of P.T. Bauer, Novak points out that, considered both as a fraction of U.S. foreign investment and as a fraction of the internal Latin American economies, U.S. investment in Latin America is small. Moreover, U.S. foreign investment itself is a comparatively small part of the U.S. economy. Even if these facts did not obtain, there is a more

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The Shiloah Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies

New Publications

Middle East Contemporary Survey, Vol. IV — 1979-80, edited by Colin Legum, Haim Shaked and Daniel Dishon
Published by Holmes and Meier Publishers Inc., New York and London, 1982 xxxvi+854pp. ISBN: 0-8419-0609-2
Price: $125

This is the fourth volume of a comprehensive annual review which analyzes events and issues in the Middle East. It covers the period from November 1979 up to October 1980.
The new volume contains: An account of the outbreak of the Iraqi-Iranian war, of its initial course and its wider regional implications; an analysis of the first stages of the power struggle in Iran pitting Bani Sadr against Khomeini and his clerics; a description of how President Saddam Hussein ensconced himself as sole ruler of Iraq and made himself the object of an unprecedented personality cult; an analysis of the assault on the Grand Mosque at Mecca; a presentation of the developments leading to the military takeover in Turkey and a description of the coup itself; country-by-country sections which convey a lively understanding of the specific political dynamics of each of the countries described. Each country survey is accompanied by updated economic data; the volume also includes: regional and local maps; a detailed index of names and subjects; and a list of hundreds of documents and sources.
The three previous volumes were reviewed in newspapers and periodicals, Among the comments: *"Developments in the Middle East are so complex and subject to such rapid change that even the specialist has dufficulty in Keeping key events in perspective. The great contribution of this valuable yearbook is to compile, organize and analyze political economic and diplomatic data about every country in the area."* (Current History) □ *"With the appearance of its second volume,... the 'Middle East Contemporary Survey' established itself as the standard authoritative reference work on Middle Eastern politics and economics."* (Wall Street Journal) □ *"The Middle East Contemporary Survey is a remarkable achievement. These volumes constitute more than a mere reference work. They are encyclopaedic in scope, highly literate as well as highly useful. For serious students of the modern Middle East, for scholars, diplomats and businessmen, these volumes represent an essential acquisition for the latest up-to-date information and research available on Middle Eastern topics."* (Journal of Strategic Studies) □

Also available: Volume III — 1978-79, Volume II — 1977-78, Volume I — 1976-77, price for each volume $125;

For orders: Holmes and Meier publishers, iub 30 Irving Place, New York N.Y. 1003

The Emergence of Pan-Arabism in Egypt, by Israel Gershoni
Published by Shiloah Center: Tel Aviv, 1981 142 pp. ISBN: 965-224-001-x price: $4

The book wrestles with the question of how and when Pan-Arabism first appeared as a major ideological force in the consciousness of the cultural and political elite in Egypt. In a detailed and comprehensive analysis the author concludes that the years 1936-1940 were the formative period of the crystallization of Pan-Arabism as a major factor in the national, political, and cultural consciousness of the Egyptian elite. The concluding chapter deals in short with the waning of Pan-Arabism in the 1970's under Sadat.

Self-Views in Historical Perspective in Egypt and Israel, edited by Shimon Shamir
Published by The Chair in the History of Egypt and Israel, Tel Aviv, 1981 132 pp. price: $4

This book is the record of an Israeli-Egyptian Colloquium held at Tel Aviv University. It could be considered a landmark in the peace process, for it was the first intellectual dialogue between the two societies. The deliberations of the Colloquium dealt with the various self-views embedded in the Egyptian and Jewish historical interpretations. Three aspects received particular emphasis: the question of continuity of the collective past, the nature and contours of identity, and the position vis-a-vis modernity and the West.

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serious difficulty in that Latin American poverty existed well before there was any U.S. investment in Latin America. The causes of Latin American poverty are in fact much more complex and less satisfying to socialist analysis and Latin American pride.

One of these is narrowly technical: Latin Americans have more children than North Americans, and consequently even equal amounts of economic activity per worker would yield lower rates of income per capita. While Novak is inclined to find the practice of having large families admirable, he insists that the statistical consequences of the practice must not be charged off to *Yanqui* imperialism. But there are more important reasons for Latin American poverty, and these are embedded in the history of Latin America.

Novak points out that Spain held a narrowly mercantilist economic theory contrasting sharply with the untrammelled individualism practiced in the north, where the founding fathers wrote a constitution favoring small merchants and traders precisely because such people were seen to be committed by the nature of their economic activity to the very freedom the constitution was trying to protect. To the south, Latin America did not develop largely because it did not adopt an economic system that allowed development. Moreover, the Catholic Church was originally hostile to capitalism because of conservative objections to liberalism: what the 19th-century Church attacked as "*liberalismo*" always proves upon analysis to be democratic capitalism. Ironically, the liberation theologians, opposed to the traditional hierarchy in everything else, agree with it in despising capitalism and seeing it as the author of much woe for Latin America.

And so the Church, by opposing capitalism, appears to Novak as a major cause of poverty in Latin America. This is not an isolated instance for Novak: following a seminal study by H.R. Trevor-Roper, he traces the comparative affluence of Catholic and Protestant Europe, nearly always to the embarrassment of the former. Novak's own Church, then, becomes one of the causes of poverty in large parts of the world. A biblical *vade mecum* popular during my youth among evangelicals and fundamentalists contained a remark to the effect that Protestantism had made the United States what it is, and Catholicism had made Spain, Italy, and Latin America what they were. The facts, the author concluded, spoke for themselves and spoke loudly. Allowing for his much greater sophistication and lack of animus against Catholicism, Novak seems of similar mind.

In making this argument, he is doing more than refurbishing the work of Max Weber and R.H. Tawney. He holds that both oversimplified matters, and disagrees with both as to the real nature of capitalism. Weber especially he faults for not seeing the inescapable connection between capitalism and freedom. This is, of course, a remarkable argument to be made by a leading Catholic intellectual, particularly one who is not only a theologian but a theologian far from the fashionable fringes of theological innovation—one who, for example, seems wholly comfortable talking about God as if He undoubtedly exists and as if the universe makes the most sense if one assumes that He not only created it but takes a continuing interest in it.

As recently as the Vietnam war, a great many American intellectuals remained attracted to totalitarian socialism; in its backwash, although few of them have been willing to admit it openly, many have begun to realize that the unacceptable face of Communism has survived Stalin, and have begun to demand that socialism be democractic. Novak rejects democratic socialism as firmly as he does the totalitarian variant, even though until comparatively recently he was himself a democratic socialist. His account of his own movement from Christian socialism to democratic capitalism is insightful and astringent. As a budding Catholic intellectual, he tells us, he read heavily in those European writers who saw capitalism as "protestant": anarchic, individualistic, rejecting of tradition. He once found this position persuasive, but now believes it to have been a misguided nostalgia for village values considered in those days one of the good things about the Middle Ages. He continued to believe in socialism, as do a great many intellectuals, religious or irreligious, because its ostensible ethical system seemed so superior to that of capitalism. It took some time more for him to conclude that "the dream of democratic socialism is inferior to the dream of democratic capitalism, and that the latter's superiority in actual practice is undeniable."

This statement might well serve as the epigraph of the book. It is bound to serve as the epigraph for essays or monographs that follow upon this book. Each of the parts of the statement is important: it is not unusual for men to believe that capitalism in practice is superior to socialism in practice, a conclusion which leaves room for the perennial and damaging belief that if only socialism were done right it would bring on the millennium. But Novak maintains—with a richness of analysis that challenges the reviewer—that socialism is also inferior to capitalism in *theory*.

This is not a view that would have surprised Kant, who provided the definitive refutation of the old saw, "That may be all right in theory, but it won't work in practice." Taking Kant's position, we can see that if capitalism is generally superior to socialism in its practice, that must be because it has a superior theory. Novak's most important achievement is to spell this superiority out in detail, especially in that ethical area which most intellectuals have long conceded to socialism.

Capitalism succeeds because it is an economic theory designed for sinners, of whom there are many, just as socialism fails because it is a theory designed for saints, of whom there are few. Capitalism converts the private vices of greed and ambition into the public virtue of plenty, an idea adumbrated by Bernard Mandeville well before Adam Smith, but not much heeded since the rise of Marxism. Capitalism demands freedom in order to function, and thus liberates those

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who live under it; socialism ostensibly supports such liberation but in fact requires sharp restrictions of freedom in order to function at all. Socialism tends to replace the family with a mechanical and insensitive bureaucracy, while capitalism resides in and depends heavily upon the family, a form of social organization that appears, *mutatis mutandis*, to be the universal preference of mankind.

One need not share Novak's religious perspective on capitalism to find this book a stunning achievement, but those who have hitherto preferred socialism on religious, or indeed on purely ethical, grounds must now face an argument of immense weight—and one produced by a former fellow believer. If enough of them read it, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* may prove one of those rare books that actually changes the way things are.

Beyond the Pale?

ACTS OF FAITH: A JOURNEY TO THE FRINGES OF JEWISH IDENTITY. By DAN ROSS. Foreword by RAPHAEL PATAI. *St. Martin's Press. 244 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by CHAIM RAPHAEL

EVERYONE knows the story of the pigtailed Chinese Jew who greets his Litvak visitor in total disbelief: "*You* Jewish? You don't *look* Jewish." But though this is funny when first heard, it might seem foolhardy to write a book consisting largely, as *Acts of Faith* does, of variations on this one theme. Luckily, the variations bring out an underlying issue of considerable substance, which is of course what makes the anecdote so witty in the first place.

The issue can be stated simply. As Jewish experience has come down to most contemporary Jews, it is built around broadly unified

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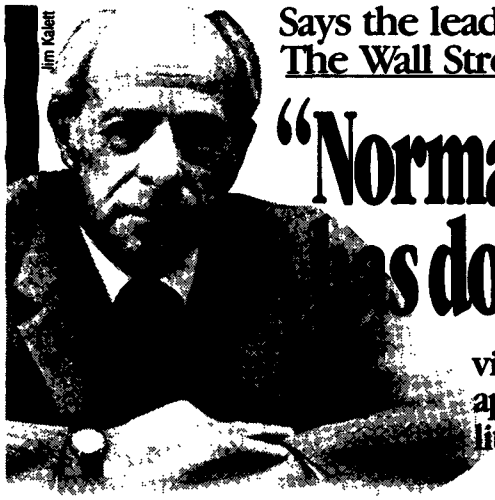
CHAIM RAPHAEL *is the author of* The Walls of Jerusalem, Encounters with the Jewish People, *and* The Springs of Jewish Life, *which will be published by Basic Books in September. In his separate guise as Jocelyn Davey, his latest mystery,* Murder in Paradise *(Walker), has just appeared.*



Says the lead editorial in The Wall Street Journal—

"Norman Podhoretz
s done it again,

visiting an epidemic of apoplexy upon Manhattan's literary salons."

"Norman Podhoretz Breaks a Leg," reads the *Village Voice* headline. "Our West Side mini-Spengler," sneers Arthur Schlesinger Jr. in *Harper's*. "A potted historian," fumes Theodore Draper in *The New Republic*.

From *The New York Times* right across the nation Podhoretz's *Why We Were in Vietnam* has hit a nerve. Why the frenzied rebuttals? Robert W. Kagan's review in the same issue of *The Wall Street Journal* says it best:

"Mr. Podhoretz has performed a valuable service by clearing away much of the deceptive rhetoric of the Vietnam period. **No doubt he will arouse the ire of those he has embarrassed in the process.** But his book is important, for it disposes of myths and falsehoods that have to be set aside if we are to understand the real errors of Vietnam."

As *The Philadelphia Inquirer* rightly predicts:

"It should generate heavy debate, considering the crises brewing in Central America." —*John Grant*

"An important and timely book.

Podhoretz's argument that our attempt to save Vietnam from Communism was an act of idealism, albeit imprudent, should help restore our sense of national purpose and enable us to act once again as a world power committed to the defense of freedom."
—*Guenter Lewy, author of America in Vietnam*

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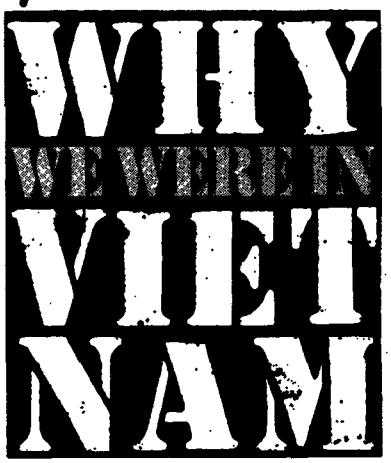

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norms into which the individual fits. To find that there are odd kinds of Jews—like the ten groups described in this book—who insist that they are Jewish though they fall outside the norms might seem to send everyone back to first base. Have all ten a place in that ideal *minyan*, a *minyan* for all seasons, which is suggested by the concept of "catholic Israel" formulated early in this century by Solomon Schechter?

This has not always been a purely academic question. With the Nazis, the definition of who is a Jew could be a matter of life or death. And on a wholly different level, in present-day Israel some "abnormal" groups have had trouble getting the authorities to give them Jewish rights in human as well as in legal terms. Altogether, one hears in the title of this book an echo of the Inquisition's *auto da fé*—a very perverse "act of faith"—and one is forced to wonder how closely these variants or mutants relate to the great body of Jews from whom most Jews today are descended.

Dan Ross appears to have launched himself into his subject by accidentally encountering the one group of the ten which carries little relevance to the central issue: some dark or dusky "Jewish Indians" who are offered as an attraction at a tourist spot in Mexico. Even though he enjoys a Passover spent with them, he soon sees that they are in origin neither Jewish nor Indian, but just another instance of someone's imagined discovery of one of the Ten Lost Tribes. The Ten Tribes do, of course, crop up at many points in the Jewish story; but this particular case is very thin in comparison, say, with the sensational discovery of a tribe of Jewish natives in South America in the 17th century by the highly fanciful traveler Aaron Levi de Montezinos, whose book on the subject became a best-seller in England in 1644 and was utilized by the passionate Judaizing sects who were active in England at that time.*

Moving on from the Indians, Ross sets out the strangely fractured life, persisting until today, of some descendants of Marranos—secret Christian Jews—in Portugal, and the discrimination that still pursues similar Marrano descendants in Majorca. In both these cases, as with the Jewish Indians of Mexico, it is interesting to see how odd groups of Jews have been brought out of their old half-existence through new associations with the state of Israel.

The same is true of the fourth group he deals with, the secret Muslim Jews of Meshed (the capital city of eastern Iran), who were forcibly converted to Islam in 1839 and have subsequently lived out a double life, as Muslims in Iran and as Jews elsewhere, with an independence and panache wholly distinct from the style of Christian Marranos. Through business wealth, political influence, and an intensely felt Meshed kinship, they have sustained themselves in small communities in various parts of the world, including Israel, with no one doubting their "Jewishness" even though they are unorthodox in religion and style.

Much more peculiar are the Dönmeh converts of Turkey, who, following the failed messiah Sabbatai Zevi, became Muslim in 1666 and kept his memory alive through engaging in deliberate reversals of Jewish laws, including (so we are told) wife-swapping orgies—all as a way of hastening the dawn of the true messianic age. If this took them beyond the Jewish pale, Sabbatianism in less heinous forms survived as a powerful strand in Jewish history for quite a long time.

THE next two groups the book deals with are, from one angle, the most un-Jewish that can be imagined, yet from another deeply embedded within the tradition from which all "normal" Jews have descended. The first are the Samaritans, who claim unbroken descent from the Hebrews who inhabited Samaria in Bible times, and who to this day sacrifice the Paschal lamb at Passover and carry out all biblical injunctions to the letter. By the same token, they turned their backs completely—from the time of Ezra!—on interpretations of the Torah, and were regarded, politically, as the deadly enemies of the Jews. (A "good Samaritan" was a contradiction in terms.) The emergence of modern Israel has changed all this: the Samaritans are loyal citizens of the state. Yet they are still wholly outside the normative Jewish tradition—which forces one to reconsider perhaps what *was* the force in Jewish life in the early centuries of the Christian era which took Jews away from any literal following of the Bible and steered them into the immensely involved regulations expressed in rabbinism.

This question arises even more strongly in relation to the second group, the Karaites, who assert a much more authentic relation to the Bible than that of the "rabbinite" Jews, and who have been very important in Jewish history even though they are wholly outside the Jewish tradition. The Karaite movement began in the 8th century, in the area which is now Iran and Iraq, as an outright attack on the authority of the *Halakhah*, Jewish religious law, which the rabbis claimed was derived from Torah teachings handed down by word of mouth since the time of Moses. The name Karaite is derived from *kara* ("to read") which indicates a determination to obey only the *written* Torah. The gap that this established can be seen in the rules on food. To Jews in the rabbinic tradition, the Bible ordinance, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk," yielded an immense body of law on the separation of milk and meat, leading to a rigorous separation of pots, pans, dishes, etc., and complicated regulations of diet. "The Karaites," Ross explains, "take the verse literally. They do not seethe a kid in the mother's milk. Period."

This literal attitude has many facets. Karaites do not use *tefillin* (phylacteries) or the *mezuzah* (a small case, containing biblical verses inscribed on parchment, that is attached to doorposts of the house), because these rabbinical ordinances go beyond the Bible. They take off their shoes on entering a synagogue, in accordance with

* The story is told graphically in a new book by David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655* (Oxford, 286 pp., $39.95).

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God's instructions to Moses: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Strictness of this intensity is common among many kinds of sectarians; what makes it strange in the case of the Karaites is the fact that they also developed a very strong political position. Their separatist tradition took hold, especially in the Turkish empire and different parts of Russia, where they were often exempted, as "non-Jews," from living in the Russo-Polish Pale of Settlement. The Nazis themselves hesitated before ruling that they were to be classified for destruction like all the others. Indeed, the bizarre situation arose in which Nazi officials consulted Jewish leaders on the status of the Karaites; in an absorbing section of the book, Ross tells how rabbis who had fiercely rejected the Karaite claims of a separate racial origin now allowed themselves to be defeated in a debate on this question so as to spare the Karaites from death. (A more somber part of the story is that some Karaites were said by Jews from the camps to have collaborated with the Nazis.)

Readers of Arthur Koestler's book *The Thirteenth Tribe* will recall that he adduced evidence from a notorious Karaite, the forger-scholar Abraham Firkovich (1786-1874), to support his theory that a very large part of all the Jews of Eastern Europe were descended from the Aryan Khazars who were converted to Judaism in the 9th century. To add to all these past and continuing conflicts, Karaites in Israel today are given a peculiarly limited status as Jews, since the authority on marriage and divorce is vested, of course, in the rabbinite establishment.

The Karaites' second-rate status in Israel is paralleled to some extent by the position of two more groups described by Ross, the black Falasha Jews from Ethiopia and the dark Bene Israel Jews from India. The origins of both are obscure; if their passion to be accepted as Jews is strong, their acceptability has undoubtedly been affected by the fact of their physical difference from "ordinary" Jews. It can at least be said, however, that in these two cases the rabbis have finally given these odd cousins a clean bill of Jewish legality.

WITH the tenth group in the book, the Jews of Kaifeng in China, we are back to our original joke. The story has often been told (most recently in Michael Pollak's *Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries**) of the discovery at Kaifeng in the 17th century by a Jesuit missionary of a group who were completely Chinese physically and linguistically, but with a distinct religious tradition linking them to Jews. Nothing was or is known of their origin, but they had, and could vaguely read, the Torah. A physical reproduction of their synagogue is now to be found in the Museum of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv; this is virtually all that remains of them today. The real question to be asked is not how they got to Kaifeng originally, but what there is in Jewish faith which impelled these obscure travelers in some distant century—in Bible times, or after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., or during the first heyday of Jewish world trade in the 10th century—to perpetuate the tradition of their ancestors against all the odds.

In the end, the peculiarities of survival and transmutation which are revealed quite entertainingly in this book are to be seen as exceptions that prove—i.e., establish—the rule that it is within the great mass of Jewish fulfillment in the rabbinic tradition that Jews have made their imperishable mark on civilization. One has to see the vagaries of Jewish history with a sense of proportion—and this can be expressed, perhaps, in another anecdote. It is said that Sir Isaac Wolfson, a contemporary benefactor of Jewry on a massive scale, found himself troubled one day by

* Jewish Publication Society, 1980.

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a problem in one of his huge companies, and decided, since he is an Orthodox Jew, to seek advice from the Almighty. Entering the synagogue, he found a Jew at prayer, weeping and wailing at his inability to meet his rent of five shillings. Sir Isaac joined the man in prayer for a few moments, and at the conclusion handed him the five shillings. The man left the synagogue enraptured. When the door closed, Sir Isaac turned to face the Ark. "And now, God," he said, "I want Your undivided attention."

Social Policy

THE NEW CLASS WAR: REAGAN'S ATTACK ON THE WELFARE STATE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. By FRANCES FOX PIVEN and RICHARD A. CLOWARD. *Pantheon. 163 pp. $11.50.*

Reviewed by LESLIE LENKOWSKY

EARLY in 1981, it seems, the Reagan administration began a war. It was not an old-fashioned shooting war, but rather one of economics, and the adversary was not a foreign power but the American poor. "What has Ronald Reagan declared war on?" asked the New York *Times* in March. It answered: "The philosophy of social justice this country has evolved over the last 50 years." "The New York *Times* is right," the British columnist Henry Fairlie reported to his readers, "the program is a declaration of war: and what it is saying, but does not say, is that the war so declared is a class war. . . ."

A year later, *Newsweek* emblazoned on its cover the picture of a waif and the legend, "Reagan's America: The Poor Get Poorer." Television was bringing scenes of the war into the living room; social scientists were producing grim statistics recounting the casualty toll. As it approached its midpoint, the Reagan administration may have lacked a clear foreign policy and may have seemed confused in other areas as well, but no one who even casually followed the news could mistake what the administration was doing domestically: it was dismantling the American version of the welfare state.

The President, of course, denies this, and he now has support, of sorts, from a most unlikely source: the left-wing social scientists, Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward. In *The New Class War,* they agree that the Reagan administration is making an effort to trim poverty programs in order to fatten business profits, but argue that the effort is doomed to fail. The reason is that the welfare state serves too many people for it to be undone by "men of property." Indeed, Piven and Cloward believe that the Reagan administration's assault will disprove their own previous theories about the ability of capitalists to insure a supply of cheap labor by expanding or contracting welfare benefits. (Their earlier work, they write, "represents a better characterization of the past than a prediction of the future. . . .") Whatever the President and his "big-business allies" may intend, they will not succeed in repealing the social legislation of the last fifty years.

On the face of it, this would seem to be a hopelessly sanguine outlook, even for neo-Marxists. Piven and Cloward themselves report that the brunt of the Reagan administration's first-year budget cuts fell on programs that aid the poor, such as public assistance, food stamps, and Medicaid. The second-year proposals call for more of the same. When the effects of the tax cuts are considered along with the benefit reductions, they write, the President appears to be playing Robin Hood in reverse, taking from those with low incomes and giving to those with high. All this, moreover, is on top of an economic policy that has lifted unemployment to a postwar record.

Yet despite these developments, the welfare state is far from through. Even after the Reagan cutbacks, the number of people receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (the main public-assistance program) will still amount, according to the Congressional Budget Office, to 10.7 million in 1983, down from 11.1 million in 1981. Food stamps, Medicaid, and other "entitlement" programs will also continue to serve upward of 80 percent of their pre-Reagan caseloads. Another CBO study concludes that benefit reductions will average less than 3 percent of income for households earning below $10,000 per year, and if savings from tax cuts are taken into account, the net loss will fall below 2 percent and virtually vanish by 1985. (By comparison, the net *gain* to households with more than $80,000 per year averages a mere 4.5 percent, all of it a consequence of lower taxes.)

Furthermore, the Reagan administration's vaunted class war leaves the most extensive part of the welfare state—the "'social insurance" programs such as Social Security, unemployment compensation, and Medicare—virtually untouched. To be sure, since lack of income is not a condition of eligibility, much of the clientele of these programs is middle class. But they wind up giving considerable aid to the poor as well, and nothing done by the President and his allies has really changed that situation.

As Piven and Cloward suggest, one reason for this outcome is the sheer scope of American social policy. Even compared with European programs, these radical critics now write, welfare benefits in the United States "are anything but insignificant; they are a force of indisputable importance in the American political economy." Just as the Reagan administration was supposedly declaring its war on the poor, the Census Bureau issued a report showing how important a force welfare is: one in three American households, it said, receives some form of non-cash benefit from the federal government, and millions more obtain cash. More recently, the New York City Human Resources administration found that 1.4 million people—about 20 percent of the city's population—depend on at least one income-support program, and this figure does not include those who receive Social Security or Medicare. Such figures may be a measure of the need for budgetary pruning, but also indicate the political complexities involved.

Added to this is the inability of the Reagan administration to present a convincing rationale for cutting

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social programs, other than a general desire to trim the size of government. Not that Piven and Cloward have any doubts concerning the administration's philosophy. They believe the President's efforts grow out of a coherent theory of human nature, namely, that while the affluent respond to rewards, "working people respond only to punishment —to the economic insecurity that will result from reductions in the income-support programs." If qualified by the supply-siders' point that workers can be motivated by the prospect of gain, just as the affluent can be driven to avoid penalties, this is not a bad characterization of what some defenders of the administration have argued. Indeed, it is the essence of "trickle down." Social policy is no more than a handmaiden to economic policy.

UNTIL the onset of the New Deal, Piven and Cloward claim, this was the reigning view, legitimizing harsh treatment when labor was scarce and generosity when it was not. But since then, and especially since the Great Society, democracy has made inroads on capitalism and government aid to the poor has acquired a legitimacy of its own. The record being compiled by the Reagan administration will show whether they are correct.

Yet much of what the welfare state does would not in any case be greatly affected by the condition of the economy. Neither the number of aged receiving Social Security nor the number of sick on Medicare will much change even if the administration's most optimistic forecasts are realized. Full employment would still leave numerous people collecting unemployment insurance. Despite generally declining benefits, the public-assistance rolls showed a dispiriting constancy throughout the economic ups and downs of the last decade. The welfare state was established to deal not just with financing hardship but with the other perils of life as well. Prosperity might alleviate some of them, but even if "trickle down" succeeded, the need for a substantial social policy would remain.

Other rationales for cutting back that are offered by the administration similarly leave much to be desired. Reducing waste, fraud, and abuse is an unobjectionable goal, but it does not address the basic question of whether even a more honest and efficient program, available only for the "truly needy," is worth having. Few who understand the social disaster created by Aid to Families with Dependent Children are likely to be excited about a set of proposals which, if completely successful, will reduce that program's caseloads by only 5 or 10 percent.

A related problem arises in connection with the Reagan administration's aim of creating a "safety net" beneath which, as Churchill once said, none need fall. By itself, such a goal implies nothing about which programs should be preserved and at what levels. Without further guidance, the President's choice will continue to seem arbitrary and motivated more by budgetary considerations than by social policy. In any case, the promise of a soft landing for many or all Americans hardly constitutes a rollback of the welfare state.

Still another defense has been to call upon state and city governments to decide social policy, as if fifty or more miniversions of a program are better than a single large one. Aside from the fact that the would-be recipients seem none too eager for this gift, to a significant extent states are already administering social policy, and the degree of local control may be only slightly enhanced if the New Federalism becomes a reality. (The Reagan administration has been no less hesitant than its predecessors to impose requirements it thinks desirable upon federally-aided but state-run welfare programs.) Moreover, especially if Medicaid is shifted to the federal government, many more programs will have to be turned over to the states before Washington can be relieved of responsibility for making up its mind about the welfare state.

Finally, there is the notion of

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"private-sector initiative," the supposedly bright new idea of this administration which, to anyone familiar with the history of social policy, is not really so new as all that. Many of our most important programs—unemployment insurance and old-age pensions, for example—began under private auspices, and others, notably health insurance and job-training, are still mostly under private auspices. The theory that these and other activities can be accomplished better if government's role were lessened is worth exploring, not least to confront directly the accusation made by Piven and Cloward and others that capitalism and its associated institutions are inherently inegalitarian and oppressive. But insofar as "private-sector initiative" becomes one more slogan to induce those outside Washington to pay for what the federal government no longer wishes to support, it will be of little value. George Gilder may believe that capitalists are motivated by altruism, but one should not therefore expect them to become social workers. Nor, given the scale of resources required, are they likely to pick up the slack—as even the administration now admits.

TEN years ago, Nathan Glazer wrote in COMMENTARY that there were really just two traditions in social policy: a liberal one that was meliorist and sought to provide a new program for every problem, and a radical one that saw no solution outside a total reconstruction of society. Both were flawed, but there seemed to be no alternative: conservative social policy amounted to little more than the liberal version, done in slower motion.*

To judge from the first eighteen months of the Reagan administration, there is no need for Glazer to reconsider. Despite much activity, the President and his men have so far failed to develop an approach to the welfare state that can both guide their own actions and persuade others to go along with them. Until they do, this administration's only war will continue to disappoint its friends and gratify its critics.

* "The Limits of Social Policy," September 1971.

Ricardo/Richard

HUNGER OF MEMORY: THE EDUCATION OF RICHARD RODRIGUEZ. By RICHARD RODRIGUEZ. *Godine. 195 pp. $14.95.*

Reviewed by SUSAN SEIDNER ADLER

THE story is familiar in its outlines. Clever and watchful, the son of a poor immigrant family (in this case Mexican) is propelled by his easy successes in school into a world that is far removed from that of his parents. But that is where familiarity ends. For Richard Rodriguez's account is not so much the record of a personal journey from one destination to another as it is a study of the distances that separate them, a careful assessment of the price that has had to be paid for achievement.

At an early age Richard Rodriguez became painfully aware of the class and cultural differences between his Spanish-speaking family and the English-speaking outside world. He turned Spanish and English into metaphors for the most critical division in a childhood world: that between the personal and the impersonal. Inside the screen doors of his home in Sacramento, California, his family life was safe, happy, and noisy, "a celebration of sounds." Outside, the authority of his parents was disturbingly diminished; they became heartbreakingly vulnerable, alien, mute. He listened, embarrassed, as they struggled to make themselves understood, measuring the self-confident voice of a gas-station attendant against his father's suddenly pitiful high-pitched falsetto. Since his Spanish-speaking home became a haven where he could hide from the unpleasant realities enforced by an English-speaking world, he drew a childish distinction between a language of intimacy and a public language:

> My parents would say something to me and I would feel embraced by the sound of their words. Those sounds said: *I am speaking at ease in Spanish. I am addressing you in words I never use with* los gringos. *I recognize you as someone special, close, like no one outside. You belong with us. In the family.*

What Rodriguez discovers in the course of growing up and out, and what he returns to again and again as an adult in this book, is the meaninglessness of his childhood division between an intimate and a public language. The term "intimate language," in fact, is a paradox. Intimacy is not a property of language, but is related to people, to feelings. The point, made by Rodriguez with wearying insistence, mars the clarity of his most persuasive arguments in this book, as when he attacks the supporters of bilingual education:

> Today I hear bilingual educators say that children lose a degree of "individuality" by becoming assimilated into public society. . . . They do not seem to realize that there are *two* ways a person is individualized. So they do not realize that while one suffers a diminished sense of *private* individuality by becoming assimilated into public society, such assimilation makes possible the achievement of public individuality. . . .
>
> Bilingual enthusiasts, moreover, sin against intimacy. An Hispanic-American writer tells me, " I will never give up my family language; I would as soon give up my soul." . . . He credits to language what he should credit to family members. . . . For as long as he holds on to words, he can ignore how much else has changed in his life.

When the author was a graduate student, he first published the sane views for which he has since become known: if a child is to perform well in an English-speaking society, he must learn to speak articulately in English. The sooner his English education is begun, the greater will be his chances of performing well. By starting too late, the open-admissions college programs become a cruel hoax. As Rodriguez puts it, the ill-educated are welcomed with open arms when they enter, but no one is around to console them when they leave, blaming themselves for their failure.

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In fact the real beneficiaries of affirmative-action programs are those who are lucky enough to be convenient symbols of social oppression rather than the genuinely deprived. Instead of granting meaningful opportunities to those who have none, the programs grant preferments to those who are already educated, promoting the privileged in the name of the poor.

But as this book reveals, it was easier for the author to come to terms with these issues in print than it was to come to terms with them in his own life. Not only was he expected to champion minority causes that he did not espouse and minority students whom he did not understand, but he also found himself accepting the preferments that he knew he did not deserve. As a final irony, it was only because of his background that his views gained him a certain celebrity and made him much sought-after on the lecture circuits. Aware of the hypocrisy of his situation, he had no choice, he tells us, but to break off work on his Ph.D. dissertation and leave the academic world.

And so his long education ended in reverse of the way it began. It started when he was forced at the age of seven to become Richard instead of Ricardo; it ended when, having severed his ties with the personal, private world of his childhood, he was forced to play the part of the minority representative he no longer was.

FAR from being a celebration of achievement and of opportunities won, *Hunger of Memory* is thus a dirge to success, lamenting (while defending) the necessary breaking of personal ties with all those left behind, mute. Although Rodriguez still sees himself as one of the lucky ones—he has been granted an education, a public voice—what he has lost is always more palpable to him than what he has gained.

Or at least so he says—for this is finally an unconvincing book. In spite of the pervasive air of suffering, the apologetic tone, we are left to guess at why the author is suffering and just what he is apologizing for. Although the main subject is his estrangement from his parents because of his rise in class, it remains unclear why he should feel estranged, or why his gain should be their loss. Not surprisingly, his parents too remain in the dark. His father, when told that his son is giving up his career because of his troubled conscience, very sensibly says: "I don't know why you feel this way. We have never had any of the chances before." To which the author's response is characteristic: "*We*, he said. But he was wrong. It was *he* who never had any of the chances before." And yet for all his protestations of sympathetic misery, it is not the author's fine distinctions but his father's simple use of "we" that reflects genuine family feeling.

Since the author's guilt, though genuine enough, seems always to be ascribed to the wrong cause, the only real pathos in the book lies in the discrepancy between what we hear and what we are told. We are told that education necessarily brings estrangement, but the thesis is false: understanding does not distance us from experience; understanding does not cut us off.

There is little in the book that is not analyzed strictly in terms of class. Although it is ostensibly a tribute to education, education is never described in terms of the joy or enlightenment it brings; it is described strictly as a hard-earned passport to worldly success. Books become symbols of accomplishment. We hear nothing of the impression they make, but a great deal about how much teachers, librarians, family, and friends are impressed by the quantities read. In spite of the reasons Rodriguez gives for his flight from his dissertation (to recapture his roots) and his teaching position (to escape the hypocrisy of preferential treatment), one suspects that he did not suffer overly much for his withdrawal from academia. Education is seen here as a process that is long, unglamorous, and demeaning, leading to membership in a community of scholars that is referred to as lonely, dour, and dreary. This is clearly not the community to which Rodriguez wishes to belong.

Furthermore, although the book

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is an attempt to recapture something of the closeness and intimacy of family life in the past, we learn little about the members of the Rodriguez family that is not refracted through the author's obsession with class. His parents, described only in terms of telltale mannerisms, are sometimes pitiful and sometimes caricatures. But they fare better than his many sisters and brothers, who are nothing but complexions (light or dark), jobs, furs, trips, cars.

The same is true of friends. They are referred to during boyhood either as *gringos*, the children of the rich, the middle class, or professionals; later, as either envious academics or the kind of laughing intimates who are seen at tennis and brunch parties on Sunday mornings (when the author's former intimates would be in church).

Even the reader is imagined in class terms: "Someone with a face erased; someone of no particular race or sex or age or weather. . . . All that I know about him is that he has had a long education and that his society, like mine, is often public (*un gringo*)."

Finally the author protests too much. Although he continually tells us that he suffers from a sense of the poor's lack of advantages, from the evidence of this book he is suffering rather from an exaggerated sense of the chasm between himself and them—in short, from a sense of superiority. He is in fact guilty of nothing but being a snob.

Military Thinking

ON STRATEGY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE VIETNAM WAR. By HARRY G. SUMMERS, JR. *Presidio Press. 137 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by ELIOT A. COHEN

COLONEL HARRY SUMMERS begins this concise and fascinating study of American strategy in Vietnam by disposing of two myths. The first, prevalent among many civilians (and fed by misleading books like Richard A. Gabriel and Paul L. Savage's *Crisis in Command*), is that American troops were defeated in Vietnam. The second, prevalent among many officers, is that we lost the war simply because of a failure of will on the part of civilian politicians. Summers explains that we never lost a battle but that we did indeed lose the war. He has the courage to say that the armed forces failed in their first duty: "As military professionals, it was our job to judge the true nature of the Vietnam war, communicate those facts to our civilian decision-makers, and to recommend appropriate strategies."

Although this is a short book, it is one which raises a host of important questions about the course of the Vietnam war, the nature of American civil-military relations, and the essence of strategy itself. Summers makes painstaking use of classical strategic throught to explicate our failure in Vietnam. He quotes extensively but shrewdly from Clausewitz's *On War*, and devotes a large section of the book to an analysis of the Vietnam conflict in terms of the "principles of war" (the objective, the offensive, mass, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, surprise, security, and simplicity). His deft treatment shows how these seeming platitudes take on meaning in the context of military history.

Summers's arguments are provocative: he claims that from the beginning the United States government generally, and its military advisers in particular, completely misunderstood the nature of the Vietnam war. By concentrating on the counter-guerrilla campaign in the South we neglected the real threat, a North Vietnamese conventional invasion, to which, in the end, our allies succumbed. According to Summers, we misdirected our efforts because our military leaders allowed the foremost question—what are we trying to do?—to slip away from them. Without a firm grasp on the objective, our efforts were doomed to failure.

Colonel Summers would seem to prefer, in retrospect, a strategy of battlefield isolation. The United States Army (aided by the South Koreans and perhaps crack South Vietnamese units) should have isolated South Vietnam from its northern enemy by occupying a line extending from the sea to the Thai border. Behind that line the South Vietnamese could have quashed the Vietcong insurgency and, with our aid, created an effective conventional force to cope with the North Vietnamese. Our strategy thus would have been one of active defense, i.e., a strategy aimed at denying the enemy access to the battlefield. Instead we chose a strategically passive defense, which involved reacting to enemy infiltration with a multitude of search-and-destroy missions. This tactical offensive did indeed kill hundreds of thousands of enemy troops, but it left the initiative with the North, as the offensives of 1968 and 1972 demonstrated.

Summers argues that American leaders misread the lesson of the Korean war. We interpreted the outcome of the conflict as a warning against becoming involved in unwinnable Asian land wars. In fact, he points out, our Korean strategy was a success, because the United States obtained its objective of creating a defensible Republic of Korea. Unlike our policy in South Vietnam, in Korea we fended off North Korean and Chinese regulars while our South Korean clients wiped out Communist guerrillas and gradually, under our aegis, created an effective conventional force.

Summers's argument here is intriguing but open to question, for it is conceivable that Korea and Vietnam differ from one another less in degree (as he suggests) than in kind. It is, of course, impossible to know how the North Vietnamese would have reacted to the creation of a strategic barrier extending some two hundred miles inland, or how such a barrier would have operated, but the history of such cordon defenses is not encouraging. What is clear, in any event, is that the strategy and tactics we adopted did not prevent South Vietnam from falling to the Communists.

UNDERLYING Summers's account is a deep unease over the rupture between the Army and American society during the Vietnam period.

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In the years following 1940, the American Army, and above all its professional officer corps, had grown accustomed to a substantial amount of respect and even deference. The hostility directed at the armed forces by civilians during the Vietnam period aroused a horror which pervades Summers's book, and which remains today an undercurrent in conversations I have had with colonels who were junior officers (lieutenants and captains) in Vietnam.

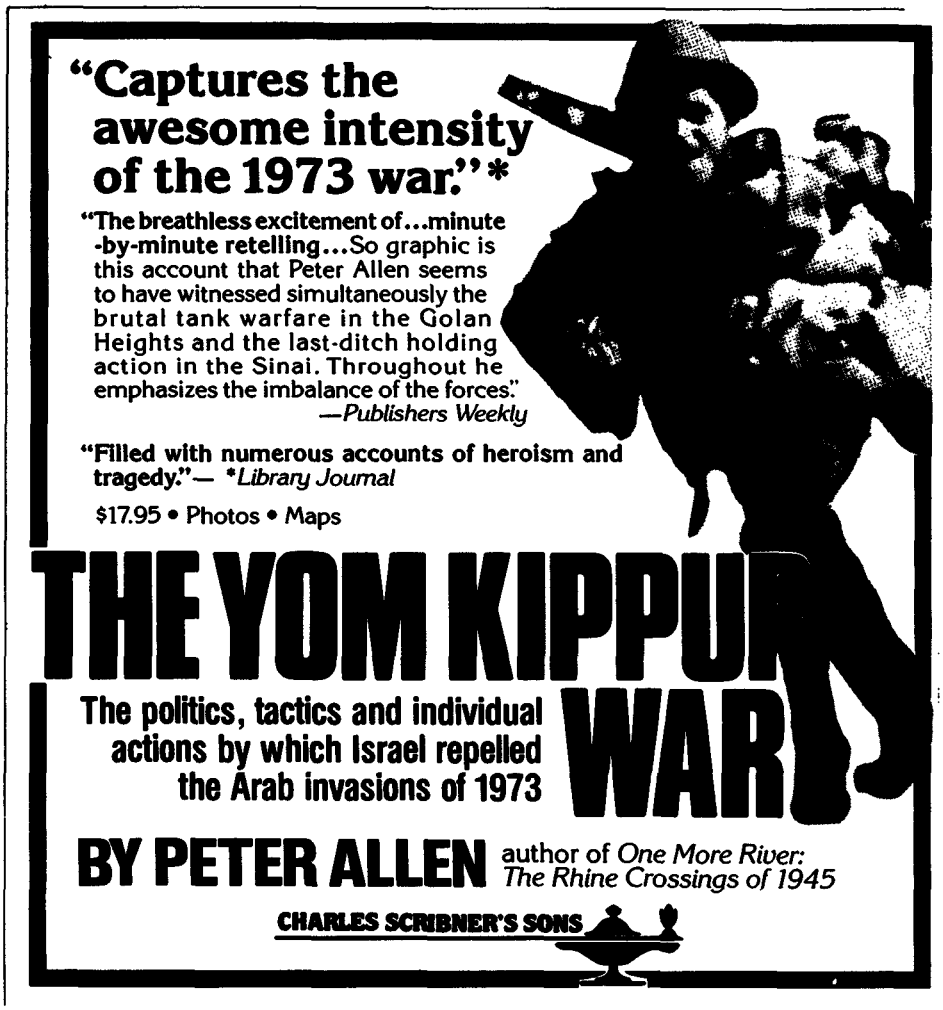
Summers insists, as do most of his contemporaries and colleagues, that our biggest mistake was the attempt to fight Vietnam in cold blood, without a declaration of war. Unable to depend upon the psychological mobilization that would have accompanied such a declaration, the Army, composed of citizen-soldiers though it may have been, acquired the reputation of a monster, stupidly and squalidly consuming eighteen-year-old lives. A declaration of war, Summers believes, would have brought Army and society into harmony. Although it would also have meant a commitment to victory, victory would have been defined as the achievement of a specific, limited political objective—the creation of an independent South Vietnam—not the unconditional surrender of the North Vietnamese.

It is an appealing argument, but, again, open to debate. The United States, because of its role as guarantor of order in large parts of the world, must, like Great Britain before it, be ready to fight a multitude of small, dirty wars. Such wars must be fought in cold blood, for to conjure up the energies of an embattled nation is to risk either disproportionate public attention to minor problems or the inevitable feelings of disgust that are aroused in a democracy when it confronts the grim necessities of chronic warfare. The Johnson administration did not mobilize large numbers of reservists in 1967-68 because it feared that such a move would provoke calls for an invasion of North Vietnam and a dangerous widening of the war (including perhaps Chinese intervention). On the other hand, a frequent resort to declarations of war, accompanied by conscription and reserve mobilizations, might provoke a refusal to take on such ugly but necessary campaigns as that waged in Korea.

One solution to this dilemma might be the exclusive use of our elite, professional Marine Corps to fight small, undeclared wars. The Marines have long been composed mainly of volunteer career soldiers, and are accustomed to fighting nasty conflicts without the benefit of popular support. The strictness of their discipline and the monkish peculiarities of their traditions at once isolate them from American society and prevent them from depending (as the Army does) on constant approbation. The Army has fought every major war with masses of citizen soldiers; the Marines have preferred, insofar as is possible, to take only volunteers—"a few good men" as the advertisement has it.

There are difficulties with this solution, however. The Marines are few in number, and the other services are unlikely to view with equanimity an expansion of their size. They must devote much of their attention and resources to the peculiar requirements of amphibious warfare; they do not have organic logistical and administrative support; they are scattered around the globe. Perhaps most important, it is in the nature of things that the Army will not allow others to fight a sizable American war, if for no other reason than pride.

One of the many merits of Summers's book is that it brings questions like these to the forefront of our attention. It is indeed the proper role of military men to educate civilians, be they politicians or average citizens, in the nature of war. Of late, civilian policy analysts, journalists, academics, and mere onlookers have usurped this role—indeed, one source of our failure in Vietnam was the government's fascination with unrealistic academic theories of military strategy (as Stephen Rosen argues in a forthcoming article in *International Security*). There is a place, in fact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a great need, for informed civilian discussion of military policy, but strategy and tactics are and should be the business of professional soldiers. Colonel Summers's book indicates that the armed forces are perfectly capable of producing lucid and literate strategists. One may disagree with his conclusions, but one hopes that there are more like him.

Arabs Against Themselves

THE ARAB PREDICAMENT: ARAB POLITICAL THOUGHT AND PRACTICE SINCE 1967. By FOUAD AJAMI. *Cambridge University Press. 220 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by MARTIN KRAMER

THAT the Arabs share a predicament seems at once implausible. Some grow impoverished, others wax rich. Some are caught up in world politics and markets, others cannot imagine what lies beyond clan or village. A great majority profess Islam, but others have succumbed to rational doubt. They inhabit a score of kingdoms, emirates, and republics, most of which have met and withstood repeated plans for amalgamation. The Arabs are a nation, but a divided nation. Each part grapples with a very private predicament, which it not uncommonly seeks to inflict upon the whole.

Is there more than an aspiration for hegemony and a propensity for internecine strife that binds the Arabs? Unlike the two peoples between whom they are wedged, and with whom they share a common legacy, the Arabs are hesitant. The Turks elected thorough secularization, democracy, and Westernization, and most Arabs looked on in awe and consternation. The Iranians have now chosen radical Islamization, hierocracy, and disavowal of the West, and most Arabs again watch in awe and consternation. They waver between difficult choices, while claiming a rare capacity for reconciling all competing claims in their own way. Some are not quite sure about the strictures of socialism, and so elaborate an enigmatic Arab socialism that recognizes no conflict of class. Some are not really certain about the merits of representative democracy, and so tell themselves and others that they have improved upon it to arrive at a desert or Arab or Islamic democracy, unencumbered by parliamentary institutions. Some fear the dislocations of revolution, and so evolve a doctrine of Arab revolution which manages without a revolutionary social program.

It is Fouad Ajami's premise that this "hybrid of cultural and technological mimicry with regressive social institutions" is not viable, and that "it is the lot of the Arabs to make their choices in the eye of the storm. Their world has become too pivotal to be left alone." That world, set "so close to the fire," is all too liable to come undone tomorrow.

This is by now a familiar format, the compedium of judgments and insights on a thwarted people by a troubled native son. V. S. Naipaul's work set the guild's literary standards and defined its themes. Here, too, the argument is essentially Naipaulian: "Neither large wealth nor displays of traditions will arrest the drift toward disorder in vast stretches of the Arab world. Wealth has only underlined a painful gap between what a society can buy and what it can be." Note that it is disorder, not revolution, which awaits the Arabs. In disorder, one can still equivocate; the Arabs have been more confident of their ability to contain Lebanon's lingering civil war than Iran's revolution.

But it is the Lebanese deadlock, the probability that it will widen to embrace other Arabs, which shadows this account. Ajami was born in Arnoun, a village in southern Lebanon four miles from the border with Israel, now set right in the crucible. That accidental credential, and his own talent, have brought him to Johns Hopkins, the New York *Times*, Chatham House, and the Council on Foreign Relations, where he teaches and appears not only as an authority on the Arabs, but as an Arab authority on the Arabs. There is a difference, and given Ajami's affirmation in his preface that this is a personal document, allowances must be made for his own predicament, for it has affected this statement in a subtle fashion.

AJAMI calls his book a "chronicle of illusions and despair, of politics repeatedly degenerating into bloodletting," and so he appropriately begins with a murder, that of a prominent if not very principled Lebanese journalist. Salim al-Lawzi, the editor and publisher of an influential Arabic periodical in London, arrived in Beirut in early 1980 to attend his mother's funeral. There he was abducted, secretly executed, and his body discarded outside the city. In light of his unconcealed opposition to the Syrian presence in Lebanon, suspicion naturally fell upon Syrian agents, and here it is worth supplying a grisly clue which Ajami for some reason omits: the flesh of Lawzi's right hand had been burned off with acid. "The world can be read into small events," reflects Ajami on the murder and mutilation, and the opening is a highly personal musing. In Lebanon and Syria, the threat of physical violence is brandished precisely against journalists and writers with whom this book often expresses so close an affinity of ideas. Later we also learn that Iraq, a state "bent upon entering the nuclear age," "strictly regulates the usage of privately owned typewriters. Only friends of the government are given licenses to acquire them. Typewriters smack of political freedom, of pamphlets and agitation." Rule or die, Ajami submits, is the credo of the Arabs, and writers flatter rulers or risk retribution. There is no rejoinder to the bullet book review, no middle ground upon which this author and others of outspoken opinion might have stood. When they can, they flee, swelling the ranks of Arabs in exile.

Ajami knows what does not explain his own estrangement or the tragic circumstances in which so many others now find themselves. One reads no indictments here of the triumvirate of colonialism, imperialism, and Zionism. No accusations are leveled against Free-

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masons, foreign spies, or fifth-columnists. The Arabs themselves, Ajami reasons, are at the root of their own disorder. "The wounds that mattered were self-inflicted wounds. The outside world intruded, but the destruction one saw reflected the logic of Arab history, the quality of its leadership. . . . No outsiders had to oppress and mutilate. The whip was cracked by one's own." These have been the wages of independence.

IN THREE essentially distinct essays, Ajami explores the intellectual and political aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Egypt's recent vicissitudes, and finally the rise of Muslim fundamentalism. The first chapter remembers the period of introspection and ferment which followed the 1967 defeat, drawing examples from the writings of a radical secularist, a disaffected Arab nationalist, a radical fundamentalist, and two conservative fundamentalists. "There was no place to hide; men had to contemplate where they had been and what it all amounted to." And the day belonged to brutal iconoclasts who expressed, for the first time, well-argued doubts about Islam, Arabism, and the quality of Arab politics. One of the most accomplished of contemporary Arab poets insisted that "societies that modernized did so only after they rebelled against their history, traditions, and values," and that the Arabs were simply "not up to the level of the revolution." A Yale-educated professor of philosophy and scion of a great and old Syrian family lamented that the Arabs "have made room in our lives for the refrigerator, the television set, oil wells, MIG airplanes, the radar . . . but the mentality that uses these imported products remains the same traditional mentality that belongs to bedouin, agrarian supernatural stages that preceded the industrial revolution." A fallen veteran of the Syrian Ba'th party argued that the struggle for power in his country was one between "primitive tribes," and that his own faction was "the latest version of backwardness, a tragic expression of it . . . nothing was resurrected with us—in power—but the age of the Mamluks." Ajami's own sympathies lie just below the surface of the narrative. While he complains of the "lamentable quality of secular discourse" among the Arabs, the iconoclastic critique, shorn of its excesses and wedded to a certain pragmatism, is his own.

But more war and much more wealth, the yields of October 1973, were read differently by other Arabs. It is a renascent Islam that is the mark of this decade in Arab politics, either in the patient "tradition-mongering" of the Saudis, or in the impatient "hyper-authenticity" associated with opposition and assassination. All this leads the author into unfamiliar quarters. Suspending his distress, Ajami works hard to invest the fundamentalist argument with credibility, and his spokesman for the radical Muslim critique, Muhammad Jalal Kishk, is eloquent in this summary. Kishk is an Egyptian who has written works concerned with the malignant cultural influence of the West and ways to shut it out. "The virtue of Kishk's analysis," contends Ajami, "was to demonstrate that traditional thought can be penetrating and unapologetic and can be turned on social and political problems without excessive piety."

This is in fact the virtue of Ajami's paraphrase of Kishk, for to get any sense out of it at all, he has had to prune the various fundamentalist arguments of that attention to unseen forces which explains much of their appeal. In a word, contemporary fundamentalism is a theory of conspiracy. The West is pursuing a veiled offensive through every possible agency, from cinema and television to Orientalist scholarship, and Muslims, in turn, must conspire with the unseen power of a merciful God or face extirpation. The true nature of this struggle is apparent only to initiates. Such a rage, wholly shared by Kishk, cannot be made penetrating. It thrives on faith, fear, and nescience.

AJAMI'S method is at fault here. His is a bias toward the articulate, and his sources are publishing intellectuals. Where their thoughts are disjointed, as they often are, he tidies them. Naipaul, in his very

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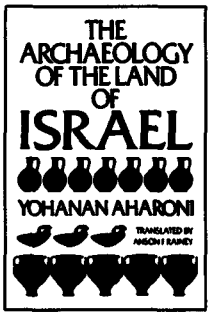

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different impressions of Muslim fundamentalism (*Among the Believers*, 1981), relates precisely what he heard from mullahs and the lesser faithful, and produces an account that rings authentic in conveying the panic and bluster of it all. Much of the dialogue is disturbing, and Naipaul does not conceal his alarm. "Instead of trying to understand these people," complains Ajami elsewhere, "Naipaul is ready to judge them. In his desire to discover their hidden vulnerabilities and point out their contradictions, their need for outside goods and outside approval, he tends to miss the drama and the real meaning of their situation." But here it is Ajami who, in pursuit of understanding, transmits only those parts of the fundamentalist argument with which he is at all capable of empathy. He withholds the conspiratorial eschatology, which is beyond his comprehension, and those contradictions that he cannot resolve. Ajami is too anxious to interpret, too ready to infer, and his paraphrase is a disservice.

THE choice of Egypt for a comprehensive inquiry is already a form of homage: "On Egypt's performance —sometimes a desperate trapeze act—other Arabs have been and remain fixated, applauding at times, full of derision at other times." Palestinian misadventures and Saudi deals, Iraqi bluff and Libyan mischief, for all their theatricality, are but sideshows. This is the book's most unsettling piece of analysis, written before Sadat's assassination and Mubarak's groping for an Arab reconcilation. "Something about Egypt has always driven its rulers to entertain ambitions that end up breaking the back of their societies," and Sadat was no different. Ajami found his particular "epic" a "nauseating pretension . . . awaiting its death, as less sophisticated, less polished people—claiming authenticity, more connected to the earth—push it into its grave," and maintains that Egypt cannot wholly escape that certain disorder in store for the other Arabs.

Now whether Egypt will crack under the combined weight of a failed economy and religious extremism no one can tell, and Ajami offers no more than a premonition. He does not know the traditional quarters of Cairo or the provinces, upon which so much hinges, as well as he knows the publishing intellectuals, who are uncertain barometers. Yet he has offered a sensitive account of the Arab fascination with Egypt and Egypt's ambivalence in its relations with other Arabs. Ajami belongs to a young generation of Arabs who kept the radio dial always tuned to Nasser's incendiary "Voice of the Arabs," a generation for whom there was no serious cultural or political center other than Cairo. Then they wanted terribly to believe that Sadat's embrace of the West and abuse of the Arabs went against a deep grain, that they had not been orphaned. Saudi Arabia, which Ajami finds "inarticulate" and "hopelessly corrupt," could not fill the void. Other Arabs are plainly obsessed with Egypt's choices, and Ajami is an incisive guide to that obsession, for he has shared it. And it must be said that his premonitions have been partly borne out.

"ALMOST every great upheaval that brings a world close to ruin is immediately preceded by a wave of cultural reassertion, by insistent traditionalism." That tradition, briefly grown to grotesque proportions, must ultimately collapse: "Then reality will intrude and shatter the illusion. Men cannot indefinitely live on frenzy or be kept in a trance." Ajami finally betrays a vestige of optimism. From his American ark, he anticipates both the flood and the olive leaf, and resists a Naipaulian finale. With an admission that "theirs is not a self-completed world," and a greater display of political acumen, the Arabs might still avoid the most harrowing scenario. But while the Arabs yet dread their future, so too must those who rely upon them. Following *The Arab Predicament*, none should be permitted to claim, as it was said of Iran, that we did not know; only that we did not believe.

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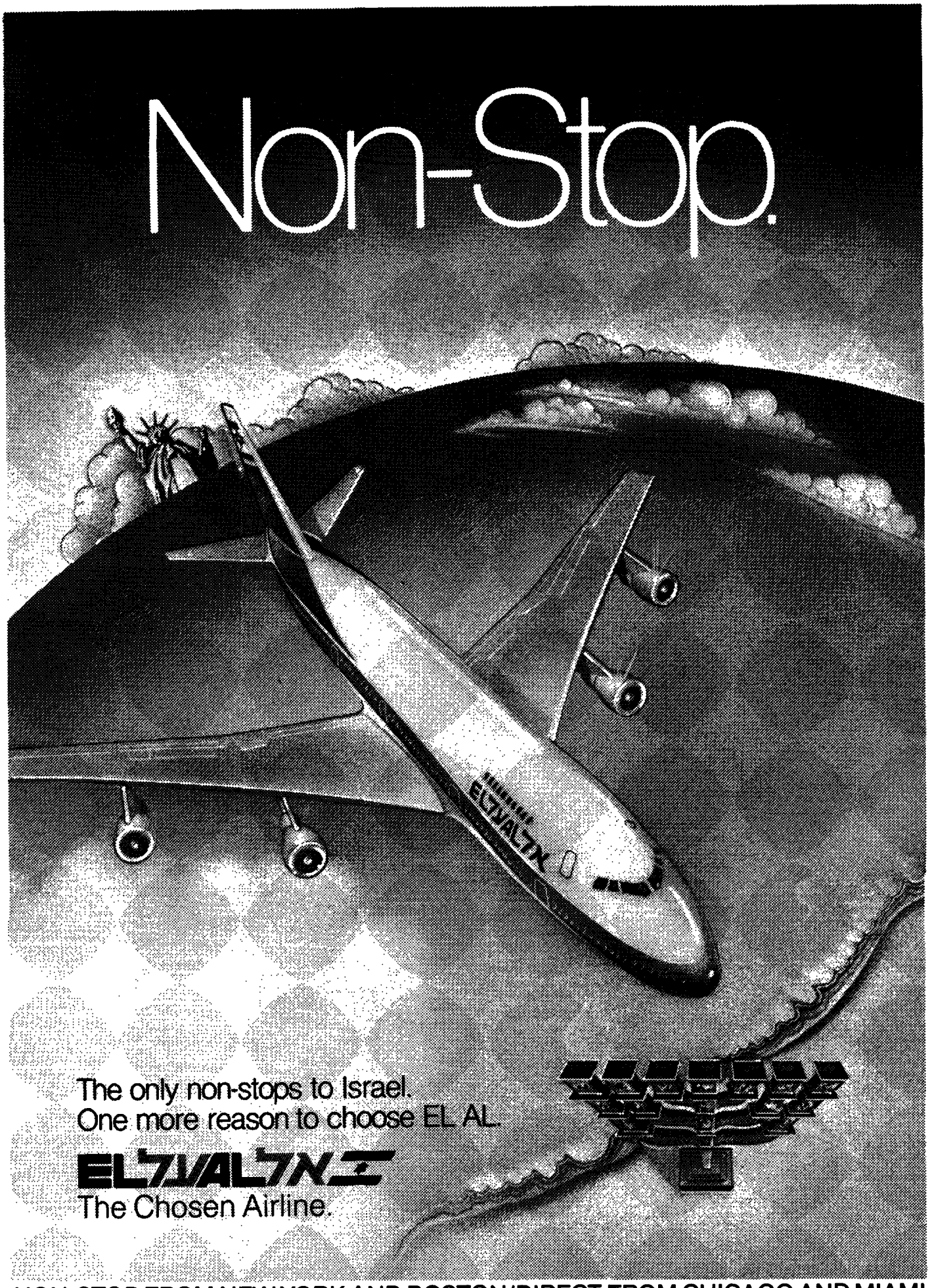

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